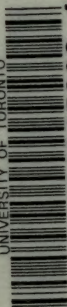


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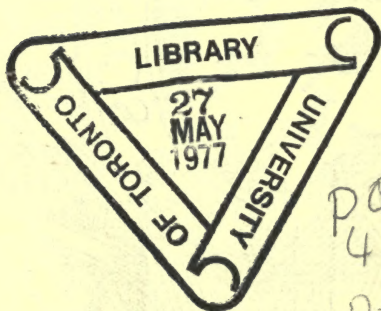
THE KING'S CLASSICS UNDER
THE GENERAL EDITORSHIP OF
PROFESSOR I. GOLLANCZ, LITT.D.



THE KING'S CLASSES UNDER
THE GENERAL EDITORSHIP OF
PROFESSOR A. COLLIER, 1870

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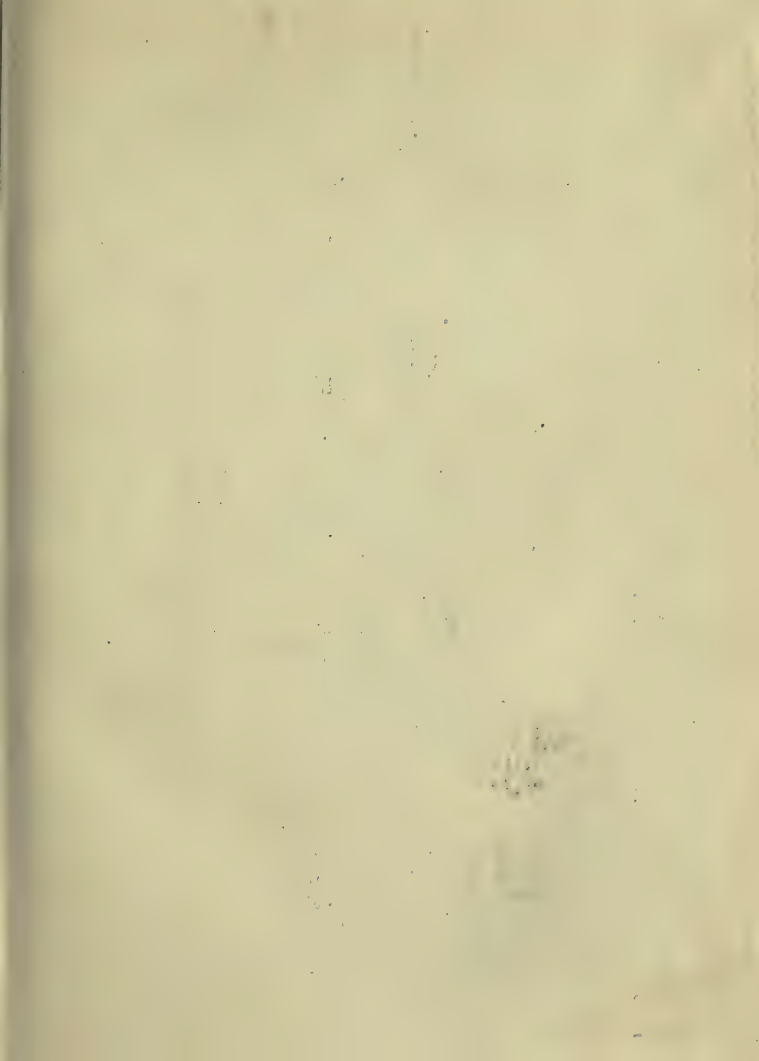




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DANTE'S VITA NUOVA WITH
ROSSETTI'S VERSION EDITED BY
H. OELSNER, M.A., PH.D., TAYLORIAN
LECTURER IN ROMANCE PHILOLOGY IN
THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

DAVID'S LITA IN STA. WITH
ROBERT'S REGION IN THE
H. OLIVER IN THE
Lecture in the
The United





J. S. Russell, 1890.

Dante's Dream
from the water colour in the possession of Beresford P. Keeton, Esq.

DANTE'S VITA NUOVA
TOGETHER WITH THE
VERSION OF DANTE
GABRIEL ROSSETTI
EDITED BY H. OELSNER

CHATTO & WINDUS, PUBLISHERS
LONDON 1908

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INTRODUCTION

THE "Vita Nuova."—"Throughout the *Vita Nuova* there is a strain like the first falling murmur which reaches the ear in some remote meadow and prepares us to look upon the sea."¹ Thus, finely, one poet of another, far greater than himself, but with whom he was in such complete sympathy, whom he loved so tenderly throughout his life, that the names of the two must ever remain entwined in the annals of literature and of art.

There is no need to tell again in detail the beautiful story of Dante's love: how he met his Beatrice one May morning, when he was nine years old, and she a year younger (1274); how they did not see each other again for nine years; how he worshipped her with the purest love from that day till the day of her death in 1290; how he forgot her memory for a

¹ Although these words would seem to imply a greater admiration for the *Commedia*, it would be an easy task to show that Rossetti's worship of Dante was based primarily on the *Vita Nuova*.

while, but soon regained his better self; how his love became more and more spiritualised, till it found its highest expression in the *Commedia*.

It has been held by some that this Beatrice never existed in flesh and blood. *Non ragionam di lor ma guarda e passa*. Such "scholars" deserve no more attention than the Shakespeare-Bacon fanatics. Others, with more reason, maintain that, though Dante was undoubtedly in love with some lady, yet we cannot identify his Beatrice.¹ For our part, we prefer to believe the much-maligned and much-discredited Boccaccio,² who lived in the fourteenth century and was far more likely to be able to get at the truth of who this Beatrice was or was not than students, however diligent, living in the nineteenth and twentieth. Moreover, while it may be difficult flatly to contradict these latter, nothing would have been easier than for

¹ The various views that have been held on this subject have been examined by Dr. Moore in a masterly article which may now be most conveniently read in the second series of the *Studies in Dante* (Oxford, 1899), pp. 79-151. He divides the theories into symbolist, idealist and realist, and concludes that there is a "large element of truth in the idealist and symbolist theories, but not the whole truth. Every theory has its difficulties, but those of the realist the least formidable."

² See the *Early Lives of Dante*, translated by P. H. Wicksteed, pp. 15-20 (*King's Classics*, 1904).

some kinsman or friend of the Alighieri or Portinari to have contradicted Boccaccio. Why is there no evidence that any of them did so? Let us assume therefore, though it is really quite immaterial, that Dante loved the daughter of Folco Portinari, Beatrice, who in 1287 married one Simone de' Bardi, and who died in 1290. Dante himself, a few years after the death of Beatrice, married one Gemma Donati, by whom he had several children; and to his eldest daughter he gave the name of the object of his early passion.

Lest students of the *Vita Nuova* should regard the Dante of this period as a mere love-sick swain, heedless of anything save his mistress only, it must be added that we know him to have been a soldier too. For why should we reject the testimony of one of his earliest biographers, Leonardo Bruni, that he was on the side of the victorious Tuscan Guelfs at the battle of Campaldino (June, 1289), "fighting valiantly on horseback in the front rank"? And surely none but an eye-witness could describe so vividly two later episodes of the same campaign, used by way of illustration in the *Inferno*: "And thus once I saw the footmen, who marched out under treaty from Caprona, fear at seeing themselves among so many enemies

(xxi. 94-96). . . . "I have ere now seen horsemen moving camp, and commencing the assault, and holding their muster, and at times retiring to escape; coursers have I seen upon your land, O Aretines! and seen the march of foragers, the shock of tournaments and race of jousts, now with trumpets, and now with bells, with drums and castle-signals, and with native things and foreign . . ." (xxii. 1-9).¹ And no sooner had Dante put the finishing touches to the *Vita Nuova* than he joined one of the guilds (that of the Physicians and Apothecaries)—a necessary preliminary in those days to all communal service; and from July, 1295, his name appears in various public documents.

The manner in which the *Vita Nuova* was composed is curious in the extreme. The lyrics were no doubt, as a general rule, set down immediately or shortly after the events which first inspired them. Thus, the earliest sonnet would belong to the year 1283, and all the subsequent lyrics inspired by Beatrice before and on her death would fall between that year and 1290.

¹ The prose versions of passages from Dante's works (other than the *Vita Nuova* and *Canzoniere*) used in this volume are by Carlyle (*Inferno*), Okey (*Purgatorio*), Wicksteed (*Paradiso, Convivio*) and Ferrers-Howell (*De Vulgari Eloquentia*); all in the *Temple Classics*.

The exact period of the later lyrics is somewhat more difficult to determine, but there is no reason to assume that any of them were composed after 1295. With regard to the narrative prose passages, so exquisite and worthy an accompaniment to the poems, it is certain that Dante did not write a line of them till he determined to collect the lyrics; and the same applies to the analyses, curious rather than beautiful, the idea of which is held by some to be borrowed from Aquinas' commentaries on Aristotle, though they may have been equally well inspired by the methods of oral exposition that obtained in the class-rooms of those days, or partly suggested by the *razos* written for many of the Provençal poems. The best critics are unanimous that the selection of the lyrics and adding of the prose narrative and analytical divisions was made by Dante during the years 1292-1295; so that by the time he had reached the age of thirty, Dante had given posterity the purest, the most intimately-felt and the most perfectly-told love-story in all literature.

Many attempts have been made to divide the *Vita Nuova* for the better understanding of the little work;¹

¹ It may be said here that the division of the *Vita Nuova* into sections was first made by Torri (1843); and his arrangement has been adhered to, with slight alterations, by

but the tripartite division evidently intended by Dante himself seems the only one admissible. On page 68 he speaks of having to *ripigliare materia nova e più nobile che la passata*, and on page 148 we hear of the *nuova materia che appresso viene*. It will be found that the first of these sections is inspired mainly by the physical loveliness of Beatrice and the second by the beauty of her soul, while the third is devoted to her memory. Professor Charles Eliot Norton was the first to point out to a wide circle of readers¹ that Dante further arranged his lyrics symmetrically in this fashion:—

10 minor poems, all but one of them sonnets,
1 canzone,
4 sonnets,
1 canzone,
4 sonnets,
1 canzone,

subsequent editors. The present edition follows the usual modern arrangement, but omits the numbering of the sections, which Rossetti, among many others, had adopted. It was thought that, as Dante did not even divide his narrative into paragraphs, the addition of numerals was superfluous. And, while on the subject of typographical arrangement, it may be added that the indentation of the English lyrics has throughout been brought into conformity with the Italian method, which lays stress on the symmetrical structure of the poems rather than on the rhymes.

¹ But see below, footnote on p. xxii.

10 minor poems, all but one of them sonnets.

This arrangement tallies with the references to the *nuova materia*. The first *canzone*, *Donne, ch' avete intelletto d' amore* heralds the second division; the second, *Donna pietosa e di novella etate* forms the centre of the work; while the third, *Gli occhi dolenti per pietà del core*, opens the final section.

That Dante learnt a great deal from the Provençal troubadours and early Italians is, of course, well known; and scholars are beginning to study his indebtedness in this respect with far more care and thoroughness than even the best literary historians had done before them.¹ But it seems doubtful that they will ever shake the modern view that Dante, for all his indebtedness, is, at his best, the supreme lyric poet of Italy. We say "modern" advisedly, for till the nineteenth century Petrarch held undisputed sway, not in Italy alone, but

¹ See, for example, L. F. Mott, *The System of Courtly Love studied as an introduction to the Vita Nuova of Dante* (Boston and London, 1896); G. Salvadori, *Il problema dello 'stil nuovo'* (in the *Nuova Antologia*, Oct. 1, 1896); L. Azzolina, *Il 'dolce stil nuovo'* (Palermo, 1903); K. Vossler, *Die philosophischen Grundlagen zum 'süssen neuen Stil' des Guido Guinicelli, Guido Cavalcanti und Dante Alighieri* (Heidelberg, 1904); Savj-Lopez' review of Azzolina and Vossler in the *Giorn. stor. d. lett. ital.*, XLV, pp. 74-88 (1905), developed in the vol., *Trovatori e Poeti, Studi di lirica antica* (1906); and V. Rossi, *Il 'dolce stil nuovo'* (in *Lectura Dantis, Le Opere Minori di Dante*, Firenze, 1906)

throughout Europe. To account fully for this preference it would be necessary to outline the history of European taste and culture during the last five centuries. It seems enough to point out that Dante's passion was the more mystic, spiritual, rare and difficult to grasp; Petrarch's the less fine, the more obvious and the more universal.¹ It was reserved for the nineteenth century to discover the sincerity of Dante's love and the comparative hollowness of Petrarch's. While the presses of Europe teemed with editions of Petrarch in the original and in translations, while

¹ From another point of view, the following passage of Macaulay, though exaggerated and overcharged, is worthy of study and consideration: "From the time of Petrarch to the appearance of Alfieri's tragedies, we may trace in almost every page of Italian literature the influence of those celebrated sonnets which, from the nature both of their beauties and their faults, were peculiarly unfit to be models for general imitation. Almost all the poets of that period, however different in the degree and quality of their talents, were characterised by great exaggeration, and as a necessary consequence, great coldness of sentiment; by a passion for frivolous and tawdry ornament; and, above all, by an extreme feebleness and diffuseness of style. . . . It may be thought that I have gone too far in attributing these evils to the influence of Petrarch. It cannot, however, be doubted that they have arisen, in a great measure, from a neglect of the style of Dante. This is not more proved by the decline of Italian poetry than by its resuscitation" (*Criticisms of the Principal Italian Writers*: No. I, Dante. January, 1824)

countless imitators, some as great as if not greater than he, sang their sonnets in all lands, Dante's deeper lyrics were all but neglected. Nor must it be thought that Petrarch is dead now: he never can die—for that his manner is far too superb. But Dante gradually came into his own. It seems difficult to realise that there was no edition of the *Vita Nuova* till that of Florence in 1576; and that this should have sufficed for all demands till the poet's city again printed the work in 1723. There is some comfort in the reflection that the two earliest issues hail from the scene of Dante's love. Six further editions saw the light during the eighteenth century, all at Venice; but in the nineteenth the popularity of the work grew by leaps and bounds. During the first fifty years, it is true, Italy required only eight editions (one with an English version); but as the century grew older the little book was printed over and over again, the commentators grew in number and in skill, and every serious student of the *Commedia* occupied himself with the masterpiece of the poet's youth. And while Italy was awakening to a sense of its beauty and importance, other countries were not idle.¹

¹ The *princeps* ed. by N. Carducci (1576) has a very defective text. This was somewhat improved by Biscioni

The "Vita Nuova" in England and America to the year 1861.—During the early decades of the nineteenth century critics were not lacking in England

(1723), who used seven MSS., and was lavishly copied by all his successors, till we come to Trivulzio (1827) and Machirelli and Ferrucci (1829), who effected further improvements. Fraticelli (1839), Torri (1843) and Giuliani (1863) were interested in the interpretation of the work rather than in textual readings. On these fresh light was thrown in the editions of Pizzo (1865), Pio Rajna (for D'Ancona's masterly commentary, 1872 and 1884, to which Carducci also contributed notes) and Casini (1885). These, together with Passerini, who has edited a valuable MS. (1897) and published some interesting fragments (1898, 1899), were till recently the leading Italian scholars who occupied themselves with the work. The critical edition of the *Vita Nuova* which had been entrusted to Michele Barbi by the *Società dantesca italiana* appeared at length in 1907, too late for the present editor to make use either of the elaborate Introduction (of 287 pages) or of the text, as his own pages had long been written and set up in type; moreover, it was obviously necessary for him to follow, in the main, the text of Fraticelli, which Rossetti tells us he employed when making his version. Two Germans, Witte (1876) and Beck (1896), also devoted much study to the question; the former was, as usual, admirable, but the latter, though not lacking in industry and enthusiasm, lacked method. Germany has also produced several versions: F. von Oeynhausen (1824); Kannegiesser and Witte (lyrics only, 1827); Foerster (1841); Krafft (1859, lyrics only); Jacobson (1877); Wege [*n. d.*, 1879]; Federn (1897); Beck (1903); and O. Hauser (1906; a volume of the series *Hortus Deliciarum*). The only other country, besides England and America, that has devoted itself with any ardour to the *Vita Nuova* is France, which possesses one imitation, by de Cesena (1843), and five

able to appreciate Dante's youthful work at its true value, and in its true perspective. Shelley wrote in the *Defence of Poesy* (1820): "The Provençal Trouveurs, or inventors, preceded Petrarch, whose verses are as spells, which unseal the inmost enchanted fountains of the delight which is in the grief of love. It is impossible to feel them without becoming a portion of that beauty which we contemplate: it were superfluous to explain how the gentleness and elevation of mind connected with these sacred emotions can render men more amiable, more generous and wise, and lift them out of the dull vapours of the little world of self. Dante understood the secret things of love more than Petrarch. His *Vita Nuova* is an inexhaustible fountain of purity of sentiment and language; it is the idealised history of that period, and those intervals of his life which were dedicated to love. His apotheosis of Beatrice in *Paradise*, and the gradations of his own love and her loveliness, by which as by steps he feigns himself to have ascended to the throne of the Supreme Cause, is the most glorious imagination of modern times." And young Arthur Henry Hallam, whose oration on the *Influence*

translations: Delécluze (1841); Ern. and Edm. Lafond (1848); Durand-Fardel (1898); H. Godefroy (1901); and H. Cochin (1905).

of Italian works of imagination on the same class of composition in England,¹ shows perhaps more promise than any of his other writings, said: "Petrarch appears to me a corollary from Dante; the same spirit in a different mould of individual character, and that a weaker mould; yet better adapted, by the circumstances of its position, to diffuse the great thought which possessed them both, and to call into existence so great a number of inferior recipients of it, as might affect insensibly, but surely, the course of general feeling. Petrarch was far from apprehending either his own situation, or that of mankind, with anything like the clear vision of Dante whom he affected to undervalue, idly striving against that destiny which ordained their co-operation." Or again: . . . "it was not in scattered sonnets that the whole magnificence of that idea could be manifested, which represents love as at once the base, the pyramidal point of the entire universe, and teaches us to regard the earthly union of souls, not as a thing accidental, transitory, and dependent on the condition of human society, but with far higher import, as the best and the appointed symbol of our relations with God, and through them of his own ineffable essence. In the

¹ Delivered in Trinity College (Cambridge) Chapel, Dec. 16, 1831.

Divine Comedy this idea received its full completeness of form.”¹

The time was now ripe for the more general appreciation in this country of so introspective a work as the *Vita Nuova*. Some of the great poets of the dawning century had prepared the atmosphere. Unfortunately it has to be admitted that the first Englishman who occupied himself seriously with Dante's love-story was attracted thereto by considerations that would have puzzled Dante no less than they have puzzled every serious student since first they were given to the world. Charles Lyell was not only the friend, he was a disciple of Gabriele Rossetti, the

¹ In the Preface (p. xxxii) to the *Remains in Verse and Prose of Arthur Henry Hallam* (London 1834), his father wrote: “. . . about the same time (1832) he had a design to translate the *Vita Nuova* of his favourite Dante, a work which he justly prized as the development of that immense genius in a kind of autobiography which best prepares us for a real insight into the *Divine Comedy*. He rendered accordingly into verse most of the sonnets which the *Vita Nuova* contains; but the Editor does not believe that he made any progress in the prose translation. These sonnets appearing rather too literal, and consequently harsh, it has not been thought worth while to print.”—Had they been published, young Hallam would have had the distinction of being the earliest English translator of these lyrics. It may be added that he was also the author of some very damaging “Remarks on Professor Rossetti's *Disquisizioni sullo spirito antipapale*” (1832).

father of the poet. It is enough to say that Gabriele expounded the whole of the exquisite love-poetry of medieval Italy in a political sense. In every way a noble and most estimable man, this is the one fault that can be laid to his charge.¹ Fortunately his disciples in this particular direction numbered only two of importance—Lyell in England² and Aroux in

¹ Even in the midst of his Dante blunders he is frequently instructive. Thus he appears to have been the first to note the symmetrical structure of the *Vita Nuova*: "These 33 poetic compositions [there are really only 31, but Gabriele followed the 1st ed. of Lyell, who obtained the figure 33 by including Cavalcanti's reply to Dante's 1st sonnet and counting the double commencement on p. 170 as 2 sonnets] are to be divided into 3 parts, according to those 3 sections, and to the 3 predominant canzoni of the *Vita Nuova*. The central canzone . . . is the head of the skein, and from that point must the interpretation begin; and then one must take, on this side and on that, the 4 lateral sonnets to the left, and the 4 to the right. . . . On this side and on that follow the 2 canzoni placed symmetrically. . . . And thus, proceeding from one side to the other, collating the 10 compositions to the right with the 10 to the left, we come finally to the first and last sonnets of the *Vita Nuova*, which contain 2 visions. . . ." There can be no doubt that Norton (see above, p. xiv) worked independently, for the letter (addressed to Lyell on Jan. 13, 1836) from which the foregoing passage is taken, was not printed till 1901 (in *Gabriele Rossetti. A versified autobiography. Translated and supplemented by W. M. R.*; p. 137).—Rossetti published his discovery in *Il Mistero dell' Amor Platonico*, London, 1840, vol. ii, p. 637.

² "The two remarkable works of Professor Rossetti (he

France. Equally fortunately, though the motives which induced Lyell to translate Dante's love-poems (1835) were as wrong as they could well be, the

says in his Preface to *The Canzoniere of Dante Alighieri, including the poems of the Vita Nuova and Convito: Italian and English*. London, 1835), *Il Comento Analitico della Divina Commedia* and *Lo Spirito antipapale di Dante*, gave occasion to the following translations. The former of these, by the novelty of the view which it exhibits of the political scope of the great poem of Dante, the unexpected interpretation of many of its mysterious passages, and the deep research and ingenuity by which they are supported, produced a great sensation among Italian scholars. Opinion was unanimous as to the talent displayed by the author, but much divided as to the foundation and solidity of some of his theories. The second work brought forward many powerful and curious illustrations in corroboration of the first, and converted many to the doctrines of the Professor. Doubts, however, were still expressed whether sufficient authority was adduced for the most singular of his speculations, the attributing a double sense to many common words and phrases, and for maintaining that it constituted a conventional language, or *gergo*, of which there is evidence in the works of all the Ghibelline writers of that æra. To satisfy myself upon this point, and the better to put the question to the test, I amused myself with making an English version of the *Vita Nuova* and *Convito*, and of the lyrical poems of Dante referred to by Signor Rossetti, as affording the strongest proof of a sectarian *gergo*. The poetical part of the performance (if it deserve the name) met with some commendation in manuscript, and I was flattered into a belief that by extending it, and giving a translation of the entire *Canzoniere* of Dante . . . I might make an acceptable contribution to literature, by drawing more attention to a very interesting controversy, and by supplying a supplement (however inferior) to the admirable work of Mr. Cary."

actual performance was in no way affected thereby. The second edition of these versions¹ was dedicated to Cary, "the unrivalled translator of the Vision of Dante"; and in the third (1845) he speaks of "the lamented Mr. Cary, to whose encouragement this revival of the Canzoniere owes its appearance." It must be said that, on the whole, Lyell's renderings are not altogether unworthy to be in this way associated with

¹ It was published in 1842 and included 282 pages of *Prolegomena* (not mentioned on the title-page), mostly devoted to an essay *On the Anti-papal spirit of Dante Alighieri* (which was in 1844 translated into Italian by Gaetano Polidori, the grandfather, on his mother's side, of D. G. Rossetti). It contains, among other illustrations, a fine engraving of the Seymour Kirkup drawing, then a comparative novelty; as also a drawing of the Torrigiani bust, a copy of which had been presented to him by Professor Rossetti. The third and last edition of the work (1845) omits the Italian text, includes brief analyses of the prose passages of the *Vita Nuova* and *Convivio*, and contains the following pathetic passage: "Professor Rossetti has made a bold and hazardous attempt to develop the mysteries of the poetry of Dante, and of his era. His learning, ingenuity and eloquence, should have secured to his writings a fair examination; but to the reproach of criticism, their merits are overlooked; the errors and vulnerable parts alone seem to have been sought for; and even these are assailed more by ridicule and sarcasm than by argument. I gladly take this opportunity of acknowledging the information and assistance which he has been ever ready to afford me; and the pleasure I have had in his uninterrupted correspondence since the first appearance of his *Comento analitico*, 1826."

Cary's name. In one respect, indeed, he is undoubtedly superior to that famous translator. Neither Cary nor Lyell cared to face the difficulties of rhyme; but the latter in a manner justifies his decision by extreme literalness—a quality with which Cary cannot be credited. On the other hand, it must be admitted that a rhymeless epic is more capable of affording literary enjoyment than a rhymeless sonnet or canzone; and for that reason Lyell's verse, for all his undoubted care, ingenuity and gifts, must always appear somewhat wooden.¹

In the same year (1845), (Sir) Theodore Martin, happily still with us, published the first important English essay on the subject of *Dante and Beatrice* in *Tait's Magazine*. This piece of work, which, if not very deep, was at least thoroughly sympathetic and free from the fatal errors of Gabriele Rossetti and Lyell, included clever versions of the lyrics.² The following

¹ Readers will be able to judge of his performance in the Appendices I and IV at the close of this volume. Appendix IV contains a specimen passage (the sonnet *Tanto gentile* with the preceding piece of prose) of all the English translations of the *Vita Nuova* mentioned in this Preface.

² It does not appear to have made any great mark at the time, but was known to D. G. Rossetti. See his letter to McCracken, dated May 15, 1854: "A better and fuller account [than an essay in the *Dublin University Magazine*] you will find in an article in *Tait's Magazine* some years

year saw the appearance, at Florence, of the first complete English version of the *Vita Nuova* (together with the Italian text). This was the work of an Englishman resident in the city of Dante's birth, Joseph Garrow. It was a sound performance, but lacked all inspiration, and so it fell dead. To America belongs the distinction of having contributed the most profound study in English in the literature of the *Vita Nuova*. This was the admirable Essay, with translations, published in a limited and very beautiful edition, at Cambridge, Mass., in 1852.¹ It was "most affectionately dedicated" by its author, Charles Eliot Norton, to James Russell Lowell. These two scholars, with Longfellow, formed a group of Danists whom any country might be proud to own. The essay dealt in masterly fashion with the *New Life* before and after the death of Beatrice, with the date and structure of the work and with its relations to the *Commedia*. Rarely if ever has Dante's youthful love been approached and treated in a more reverent spirit. "I have left

back, if the volumes are accessible anywhere in Belfast. The article is titled, I think, *Dante and Beatrice*, and is by Theodore Martin, better known as Ben Gaultier."

¹ It had been published at the beginning of the same year in three numbers of *The Atlantic Monthly*, but was improved in its more permanent form.

unsaid many things that are suggested to one who reads carefully the *Vita Nuova*, both in regard to its intrinsic qualities and its relation to the life and other works of Dante. I have done so because this volume is only for those *che sanno con prudenza d'aver ragione*. They will feel that a certain reserve is appropriate in treating of a book so full of tenderest sentiment veiled often under formal expressions, and that a respectful deference is required in dealing with the intimate revelations of a character as great and as peculiar as that of Dante . . . I have found the *Vita Nuova* a source not only of pleasure, but of inspiration in seasons of languor and disappointment. It is the doorway to a cathedral which no one can enter without having his spirit elevated and purified by its sacred influence." Writing to Norton on Jan. 9, 1862, D. G. Rossetti, who had formed a friendship with the distinguished American, while the latter was on a visit to England, said: "Your Essay on, and extracts from, the *Vita Nuova* reached me long ago with its kind inscription, and is now well and delicately done so need my testimony to its beauties. A word, however, I could not but say of it in a note to my volume.¹ Of all the accessory matter published with

¹ = . . . a work of high delicacy and appreciation."

the *Vita Nuova* in any English form yours is greatly the most valuable." And what Rossetti said in 1862 remains true to this day.

We shall see that Norton in due course supplemented this preliminary study with a version of the entire *Vita Nuova*. Precisely the same thing happened with Martin, who had likewise begun with an essay, and on whom the little work grew till he felt compelled to give it to the English public in its entirety. He had in the meantime found his Beatrice in the person of the greatest actress of her generation; and it is as likely as not that this happy union was one of the causes that induced him to take up again the story of Dante's passion.¹ He had "hoped that some other hand would long since have clothed the entire work in an English dress; but no other translation having appeared,² the present has been completed, in the belief that it would not be unwelcome to those

¹ See the close of the dedicatory sonnet to Helen Faucit:

I give this book to thee, whose daily life
With that full pulse of noblest feeling glows,
Which lent its spell to thy so potent art;
To thee, whose every act, my own true wife,
The grace serene and heavenward spirit shows,
That rooted Beatrice in Dante's heart.

² A proof, if proof were needed, that Garrow's work fell still-born from the press.

students of Dante who might be deterred by the difficulty and frequent obscurity of the original from becoming familiar with it. Another version, forming part of translations from the poets who preceded or were contemporary with Dante, from the hand, powerful both with pen and pencil, of Mr. Dante Rossetti, is announced while these sheets are passing through the press."¹ In spite of two brilliant rivals, this rendering has its readers to the present day. It is the work of a scholar throughout, the essay, the notes and the prose sections of the translation possessing undoubted value; the version of the lyrics is faithful, though, perhaps for that very reason, it often lacks charm and spontaneity.²

¹ This preface is dated Nov. 25, 1861; and the work, which has 1862 on the title-page, seems to have appeared at the very end of 1861. In the preface to the second edition of his translation (1871) Martin wrote with reference to the earlier issue: "Another version, forming part . . . of Mr. Dante G. Rossetti's *Early Italian Poets*, and in all respects worthy of his great reputation, was soon afterwards given to the public."

² D. G. Rossetti's opinion of the work is contained in the letter to Norton (dated Jan. 9, 1862) which we have already had occasion to quote. Speaking of his own *Early Italian Poets*, he says: "After all its years of progress, it only comes in time not to be behind a translation of the whole *Vita Nuova* which Mr. Theodore Martin has just brought out. I cannot say I am much afraid of it, though in the introduction

Dante Gabriel Rossetti.—When *The Early Italian Poets* appeared at the close of 1861, Rossetti was in his thirty-fourth year, having been born in London on May 12, 1828. His father Gabriele formed one of the distinguished group of Italian patriots who had been exiled from their country and found refuge in England. Their collective history still remains to be written. Gabriele became Professor of Italian at King's College, London, in 1826, having shortly before married Frances Polidori, who was Italian on her father's, and English on her mother's side. We have dealt with the elder Rossetti's unfortunate Dante studies; he always remained an ardent, though misguided worshipper of his country's greatest poet; and apart from this particular aberration, he was undoubtedly a fine scholar. His memory is still cherished in Italy as that of noble man, patriot and poet; while, as Dr. Garnett beautifully said, he will "assuredly not be forgotten by England, for which he has done what no other inhabitant of these isles ever did in begetting two great poets." The full name of his eldest son was Gabriel Charles Dante Rossetti; and surely no one was ever

and notes there is much that shows taste and scholarship, but the translation appears to me to miss the subtle side of the original."

more prophetically named. "Gabriel" he owes to his father, "Charles" to Lyell, his god-father, and "Dante" to the great Italian poet who was destined to be one of the master-influences of his life. Well might he exclaim in the sonnet (*Dantis Tenebræ*) written in memory of his father :

"And didst thou know indeed, when at the font
Together with thy name thou gav'st me his,
That also on thy son must Beatrice
Decline her eyes according to her wont,
Accepting me to be of those that haunt
The vale of magical dark mysteries
Where to the hills her poet's foot-track lies
And wisdom's living fountain to his chaunt
Trembles in music?"

On his mother's side, too, Rossetti inherited literary blood. Her father, Gaetano Polidori, was an esteemed teacher of Italian in London, who had been Alfieri's secretary, and, in addition to other works, translated Milton's poems into beautiful Italian.¹ It

¹ The minor poems appeared between 1802-1814, and the complete works in 1840. It seems as if some hereditary influence had bound the family to the service of both literatures: the grandfather renders Milton into Italian, the grandson, Dante and the other early Italians into English. —A brother of Frances Polidori, and uncle of our poet, was the eccentric John William Polidori, who became secretary to Byron in 1816 and of whom we read in Moore's *Life*. In 1819 he published *The Vambyre* under Byron's name, a tale

will be seen that young Dante Gabriel was reared in a literary atmosphere, which could not have failed to influence him even if he had not been exceptionally gifted.¹ In point of fact he was born with the double gift of poetry and of painting—a gift that amounted to genius. 'There is no need to follow his wonderful career in detail: his story has been told more frequently, perhaps, in the five-and-twenty years that have elapsed since his death than that of any other man within so short a period.² At the age of fifteen he began

which caused a great sensation throughout Europe, and formed the basis of Marschner's opera. Polidori died in 1821, at the age of twenty-six, in all probability by his own hand.

¹ The younger brother, William Michael Rossetti, besides writing copiously on Dante Gabriel, has done good work as a critic of literature and art; he also translated the *Inferno*. Of his two sisters, Maria Francesca wrote an exquisite book on Dante (*A Shadow of Dante*), while Christina is, of course, one of the two great woman-poets in English literature.

² Mr. William Michael Rossetti is responsible for the following works, which are of course authoritative:—*D. G. R. as designer and writer*, etc. (1889); *D. G. R., His Family Letters with a Memoir* (1895): the work which, with all its faults, must ever be the basis of all future study of Rossetti; *Ruskin: Rossetti: Præraphaëlitism; Papers 1854–1862* (1899); *Præraphaëlite Diaries and Letters* (1900); *Rossetti Papers, 1867–1870* (1903); *Bibliography of the Works of D. G. R.* (1905); *D. G. R., Classified List of his Writings* (1906); *Some Reminiscences of W. M. R.* (1906). General monographs have been written by

the study of art and the exercise of literature. Soon he met Millais and Holman Hunt, and with them founded the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood. These young men did not know much about the early Italian painters, except that they had gone to Nature for their inspiration: and this discovery and the paintings to which it gave

Hall Caine (a reprint of whose *Recollections of D. G. R.*, 1882, may be expected in the year 1908), Sharp (1882), Tirebuck (1882), Nicholson (1886), Knight (1897), H. C. Marillier (1899; a splendid memorial; shorter versions in 1904 and 1906); A. C. Benson (1904), Dunn (1904), W. Waldschmidt (1905). Monographs dealing principally with Rossetti the artist: F. G. Stephens (1894, *Portfolio Monographs*, No. 5); Esther Wood (1894), Destrée (1895), G. A. Sartorio (1895, *Il Convito*, 2, 4); Helen M. M. Rossetti (*Art Journal*, 1902); F. H. M. Hueffer (1902, *Popular Library of Art*); Jenssen (1905), Radford (in *Newnes' Art Library*, 1905); *Drawings of D. G. R.* (1905, in *Modern Master Draughtsman*, text by Martin T. Wood); H. W. Singer (1905; English tr., 1906); L. Pissarro (1907).—G. Sarrazin (*Poètes Modernes d'Angleterre*, 1885), Mary Robinson (*Grands Ecrivains d'Outre-Manche*, 1901), and A. Galetti (*Studi di lett. straniera*, 1903), dealt principally with Rossetti the poet, as did J. Peladan (in his introduction to Couve's French version of the *House of Life—Maison de Vie*, 1887) and A. Agresti in the Preface to his Italian translation of the *Poems—Poesie* (1899). Finally, the delightful *Letters of D. G. R. to W. Allingham* (1897), edited by G. B. Hill, are indispensable to those desiring to obtain a complete picture of Rossetti, the man; nor can the *Autobiographical Notes of the Life of William Bell Scott* (ed. by W. Minto, 1892) be neglected, though they should be accepted with caution.

rise, coming at a moment when all the worst faults of mid-Victorian art were rampant, paved the way for a revolution that made only for good. Rossetti painted some beautiful works by 1850, including the exquisite *Ecce Ancilla Domini* (now belonging to the nation); but after that date he rarely exhibited, and his personality became more and more enshrouded in mystery so far as the general public was concerned. The Middle Ages were his early love, Dante and Malory making the chief, but not the only, appeal. When quite a boy he made the beautiful version of Hartmann von Aue's *Der arme Heinrich* which is fortunately still preserved (*Henry the Leper*). We have his brother's testimony that the wonderful translations from the early Italians were begun so early as 1845, and that the dates of most of them range from 1845 to 1849. He also began writing original poems, some of which appeared in the P. R. B. organ, the *Germ* (1850), and others in the *Oxford and Cambridge Magazine* (1856). His circle of friends came to include Ruskin, Morris, Tennyson, the Brownings, Swinburne, Meredith—indeed, most of the master-spirits of the age. In 1851 he had fallen in love with a beautiful girl, a dressmaker's assistant, named Elizabeth Eleanor Siddall. Nine years later they were married, and after a union of two short years

she died. There can be no doubt that, artistically at any rate, this woman, during her life-time, was to Rossetti what Beatrice was to Dante. It is no less certain that after a while, when the earliest version of the *Beata Beatrix*—that lovely monument to her memory¹—had been painted, this influence gradually began to lose its hold on Rossetti; and that, if his temperament had been cast in the same heroic mould as that of Dante, his work, great as it remained, might have been greater still, and the world the richer. It is matter of history how, distracted with grief at his wife's death, he buried with her the manuscript of all his poems; how these were exhumed in 1869 and produced a deep impression on their publication the following year; how the only discordant note was sounded in a cruel review written by Robert Buchanan in 1871; and how Rossetti, who was not in good health at the time, never recovered from this unjust attack. He wrote some exquisite poems (*Ballads and Sonnets*, 1881) and painted some exquisite pictures during the last years of his life; but he was a wreck compared with his former self, and passed away at

¹ “ . . . a reminiscence of the painter's lost wife, pourtrayed with perfect fidelity out of the inner chamber, of his soul ” (W. M. R., *Memoir*, I. p. 239).

Birchington-on-Sea, a broken man, on April 9th, 1882. He died, as his tombstone records, "honoured among painters as a painter, and among poets as a poet."¹

Dante and Rossetti the Painter.—Enough has been said to show that young Rossetti was steeped in Dante from his earliest years. In the Preface to *The Early Italian Poets* we read: "In relinquishing this work (which, small as it is, is the only contribution I expect to make to our English knowledge of old Italy), I feel, as it were, divided from my youth. The first associations I have are connected with my father's devoted studies, which, from his own point of view, have done so much towards the general investigation of Dante's writings. Thus, in those early days, all around me partook of the influence of the great Florentine; till from viewing it as a natural element, I also, growing older, was drawn within the circle."² It seems clear that he began as a literary interpreter of the great Italian: for although the first draft of the rendering of the *Vita Nuova* was not finished till

¹ This fine monument was designed by Ford Madox Brown. One of its three bas-reliefs appropriately depicts the spiritual marriage of Dante and Beatrice.

² The Dante tradition was curiously preserved even in young Rossetti's early art training: he studied at Sass' Academy (1841) under F. S. Cary a son of the translator of Dante.

Sept. 24, 1849,¹ we have seen that some of the translations were begun in 1845, and that most of them were made within the next four years.² On the other hand, there is no record of any Dante picture till 1849, though the child began scribbling drawings in 1834. But, to make up for this, Dante subjects occupied the brain and hand of Rossetti the artist continuously from 1849 till the year before his death. So that this aspect of Dante's influence deserves primary consideration.

It must not be forgotten that it was Rossetti's original intention to illustrate his *Vita Nuova*. Thus his brother tells us (*P. R. B. Journal*, Sunday, Jan. 23 to Sat., Jan. 29, 1853): "He [Gabriel] is now possessed with the idea of bringing out his translation of the *Vita Nuova* revised and illustrated. He had intended photographed designs a short time ago, but now again purposes etchings." In the letter to McCracken already quoted Rossetti writes (on May 15, 1854):

¹ "Gabriel was engaged in the morning looking over and finishing the *Vita Nuova*." (See the *P. R. B. Journal*, kept by W. M. R., 1849-1853, under that day. The *Journal* is edited in *Preraphaelite Diaries and Letters*, 1900.)

² "I cannot say which branch of the subject may have been undertaken first. Possibly the version of the *Vita Nuova*, prose and poetry, had been made before any researches at the British Museum commenced" (W. M. R.'s *Memoir*, p. 105).

“For my own part, I had long been familiar with the work [the *Vita Nuova*] and been in the habit of designing all its subjects in different ways before I met with that article [Martin’s]. I made some years ago a translation of the entire *Vita Nuova*, which I have by me, and shall publish one day as soon as I have leisure to etch my designs from it.”¹

We do not purpose to give the complete statistics and details bearing out our statement—these will be found in Mr. Marillier’s admirable Appendix; but it is a fact that Rossetti was engaged on pictures drawn from Dante during thirty-two years of his life between 1849–1881; and that the number of works thus produced amounts to no less than forty-three, thirty of which deal with the *Vita Nuova*. Of course there are replicas among these; but it is clear that so

¹ Here is the history of a lovely little drawing intended to serve as frontispiece to the *Early Italian Poets*: “He made a graceful design of two lovers kissing, which was engraved, and formed the foundation of his water-colour entitled *The Rose Garden*. Even as late as 18 June, 1861, he thought of doing the etchings, and giving them in gratis if the publishers would not compensate him. At last this project was abandoned, and the book appeared without any designs” (W. M. R.’s *Memoir*).—The design is reproduced from a woodcut on p. 107 of Marillier’s work. It should form the frontispiece of any future edition of the *Early Italian Poets*.

true an artist would not have devoted so much of his activity to one theme without being in fullest sympathy with it. All of these efforts were not equally successful; but it is no exaggeration to say that the best of them rank with—if indeed they do not surpass—the finest pictorial renderings of the *Vita Nuova* in the world. The masterpieces are the *Greeting of Beatrice in Florence* (1849),¹ supplemented by the wonderful *Greeting in Purgatory* (1852); the perfect little water-colour depicting *Dante's Dream* (1856), which was chosen as the frontispiece of the present volume in preference to the more elaborate oil-painting (1871–1881), not only because it is less known, but also because, to lovers of the early Rossetti, it appears more direct, more simple and more inspired; the *Beata Beatrix* (1863), in which the poet-painter's ideal of Dante's Beatrice and the lover's memory of his lost wife are so miraculously fused and enshrined;² and the various perfect heads

¹ The date of the earliest version is given in each case.

² As this picture is so often misunderstood, the following explanation by Rossetti (taken from a letter) may prove of service: "The picture illustrates the *Vita Nuova*, embodying symbolically the death of Beatrice as treated in that work. The picture is not intended at all to represent death, but to render it under the semblance of a trance, in which Beatrice, seated at a balcony overlooking the city, is suddenly rapt from earth to heaven. You will remember how Dante dwells

depicting the living Beatrice (especially as the embodiment of the lines *Tanto gentile*) and the Lady of the Window. Beautiful, though perhaps not quite so consummate, owing to faults of composition, are *Dante drawing the angel* (1849) and *Beatrice at a Marriage Feast denying her salutation to Dante* (1851). The *Dantis Amor* (1859), designed as a centre-piece to the two *Greetings*, seems to have had a peculiar fascination for Rossetti, but is too precise and mathematical for the taste of some, though one fancies Dante himself would have liked it. A mere sketch, but one that might have made a delightful picture, is the *Boat of Love* (1874), illustrating the sonnet *Guido vorrei*. The *Commedia* inspired (in addition to the *Greeting in Purgatory*) the exquisite designs *Matilda gathering flowers* (1855), the *Vision of Rachel and Leah* (1855),

on the desolation of the city in connection with the incident of her death, and for this reason I have introduced it as my background, and made the figures of Dante and Love passing through the street and gazing ominously on one another, conscious of the event; while the bird, a messenger of death, drops the poppy between the hands of Beatrice. She, through her shut lids, is conscious of a new world, as expressed in the last words of the *Vita Nuova*—"That blessed Beatrice who now gazeth continually on His countenance *qui est per omnia sæcula benedictus*."—See, too, the footnote on p. xxxv.

the less successful *Pia* (1861), and above all that glowing love scene in water-colour—*Paolo and Francesca* (1855)—which, again, appears to us superior to the later versions in oil, as it certainly is finer than the companion presentment of the hapless lovers in Hell. For spiritual significance, for mystery, for atmosphere, for sheer beauty, the best of these designs will assuredly satisfy the most fastidious, the most reverent lover of Dante for all time.

Dante and Rossetti the Poet.—While still a boy, Rossetti, as we saw, produced an admirable version of Hartmann von Aue's *Der arme Heinrich*, which shows that medieval literature always had a hold on him. The renderings from the early Italians followed. These not only testify to the poet's sympathy with the feeling and with the mode of expression of those days, but have done more to promote a general understanding in England of that fascinating period than many a more learned and more pretentious work. That other medieval works, especially the *Morte d'Arthur*, were loved by Rossetti, is of course well known. But, curiously enough, his literary work, save in these renderings, shows little *direct* trace of these influences. The *Dante at Verona* is a comparative failure—successful only in so far as an academic exercise might

be successful.¹ The question remains how far these early poets, and especially Dante, may be said to have influenced his work indirectly. The only poems that have to be considered from this point of view are *The Blessed Damozel* and *The House of Life*. Just as it may be felt that certain things in Brahms would have been impossible had there been no Schumann, though it may be difficult to prove one's impression or state it in so many words: so one feels, after an intimate study of the *Vita Nuova*, the *Commedia* and Rossetti's poems, that the latter owe more to Dante than it is possible to express—*The Blessed Damozel* both in theme and spirit, the sonnet sequence in spirit alone.²

¹ It is worth noting that few Italian poets after 1350 appealed to Rossetti. On Jan. 12, 1873, he writes to his brother: "I mean to translate and edit him (Michelangelo) at odd times." And, two days later: "My own opinion is that Michelangelo stands alone as a good Italian poet after Dante, etc., unless we accept Poliziano."

² Walter Pater, one of the subtlest of critics, has succeeded in tracing and defining some of these points of contact: "One of the peculiarities of *The Blessea Damozel* was a definiteness of sensible imagery, which seemed almost grotesque to some, and was strange, above all, in a theme so profoundly visionary. The gold bar of heaven from which she leaned, her hair yellow like ripe corn, are but examples of general treatment, as naïvely detailed as the pictures of those early painters contemporary with Dante, who has shown a similar care for minute and definite imagery in his verse;

Before passing to a consideration of the volume containing our version of the *Vita Nuova*, it may be

there, too, in the very midst of profound mystic vision. Such definition of outline is indeed one among many points in which Rossetti resembles the great Italian poet, of whom, led to him at first by family circumstances, he was ever a lover—a ‘servant and singer,’ faithful as Dante, ‘of Florence and of Beatrice’—with some close inward conformities of genius also, independent of any mere circumstances of education . . . For Rossetti, as for Dante, without question on his part, the first condition of the poetic way of seeing and presenting things is particularisation . . . And this delight in concrete definition is allied with another of his conformities to Dante, the really imaginative vividness, namely, of his personifications—his hold upon them, or rather their hold upon him, with the force of a Frankenstein, when once they have taken life from him. . . . Rossetti is one of those who, in the words of Mérimée, *se passionnent pour la passion*, one of Love’s lovers. And yet, again as with Dante, to speak of his ideal type of beauty as material, is partly misleading. Spirit and nature, indeed, have been for the most part opposed, with a false contrast or antagonism, by schoolmen, whose artificial creation those abstractions really are. In our actual concrete experience, the two trains of phenomena which the words *matter* and *spirit* do but roughly distinguish, play inextricably into each other. Practically, the Church of the Middle Ages by its æsthetic worship, its sacramentalism, its real faith in the resurrection of the flesh, had set itself against that Manichean opposition of spirit and matter and its results in men’s way of taking life; and in this Dante is the central representative of its spirit. To him, in the vehement and impassioned heat of his conceptions, the material and the spiritual are fused and blent: if the spiritual attains the

necessary to utter a note of warning. Rossetti, at any rate before the period of his great sorrow, was not by any means what we consider a medieval mystic. He was a man of considerable versatility and of a buoyant temperament. He was able to paint a strictly medieval subject with humorous touches—witness the delightful *Fra Pace*. In his letters he even speaks jocosely of Dante¹; and there is a witty sketch (reproduced on p. 220 of Marillier's work, the entire Chapter XI of which should be studied in this context) depicting Dante and the other early Italians jumping through hoops, like circus clowns, the great Florentine being labelled with the words: "Dante and *his* circle." To

definite visibility of a crystal, what is material loses its earthiness and impurity. And here again, by force of instinct, Rossetti is one with him. His chosen type of beauty is one,

‘Whose speech Truth knows not from her thought,
Nor Love her body from the soul.’

Like Dante, he knows no region of spirit which shall not be sensuary also, or material. The shadowy world, which he realises so powerfully, has still the ways and houses, the land and water, the light and darkness, the fire and flowers that had so much to do in the moulding of these bodily powers and aspects which counted for so large a part of the soul, here" (from the paper on D. G. Rossetti, written in 1883, which appeared in the volume of *Appreciations*, 1889).

¹ Writing to Allingham (p. 164) he speaks of "Dante cut by Beatrice at a marriage," in allusion to one of his pictures.

leave trivialities, the ballads, though sad, are very real and very sane ; while *Jenny* is as sincere and true and as far removed from mawkishness and false sentiment as any poem of modern times. So, too, is its sister conception *Found*—at any rate in its primitive pen-and-ink form. And who shall say that the man who revived for us *Doctor Johnson at the Mitre* was devoid of humour and healthy feelings ?

The external history of the *Early Italian Poets* is full of interest.¹ We have sketched the genesis of the book. The MS. was soon in the hands of leading men of letters. As early as March 31, 1848, Leigh Hunt wrote to Rossetti, whom he did not know : “ I felt perplexed, it is true, at first, by the translations, which, though containing evidences of a strong feeling of the truth and simplicity of the originals, appeared to me harsh, and want correctness in the versification. I

¹ The full title of the first edition was : *Early Italian Poets from Ciullo d'Alcamo to Dante Alighieri (1100-1200-1300) in the original metres, Together with Dante's Vita Nuova, Translated by D. G. R.* The first part deals with *Poets chiefly before Dante*, and the second (which includes the *Vita Nuova*) with *Dante and his Circle*. Each part is prefaced by biographical and critical notes ; while to an appendix are relegated a discussion and translation of the unpleasant Forese Donati correspondence and (because they do not fall within the period of the book) versions of some more or less relevant lyrics by Boccaccio.

guess indeed that you are altogether not so musical as pictorial.”¹ On Dec. 1, 1850, the *P. R. B. Journal* tells us that “Gabriel’s translation of the *Vita Nuova* has been returned by Tennyson, who says it is very strong and earnest, but disfigured by the so-called cockney rhymes, as of ‘calm’ and ‘arm.’ Gabriel intends to remove these before any step is taken towards publication.” From the *Memoir* (p. 215) we gather that Rossetti also showed the MS. to Allingham, Patmore, Count Aurelio Saffi [who taught Italian at Oxford], “and no doubt to Mr. Swinburne and some others as well.” On Aug. 25, 1851, Gabriel writes to William: “Will you thank [William Bell] Scott for the *Vita Nuova* and for his note, which I shall answer immediately? He is quite right, I know, in all he says of ruggedness, etc., and I shall pay every attention to those matters.” Still the young poet went on filing and seeking advice. The subsequent misunderstanding between Rossetti and Browning may probably be traced to the fact that the latter was not asked for his counsel.² On June 17, 1859,

¹ It should be added that Hunt praised Rossetti’s poems.

² See Browning’s letter to W. M. R. (dated from Rome, Dec. 31, 1858): “I am indeed glad to learn that Gabriel will soon publish those translations: I never saw one of them, less thanks to him.”

Ruskin wrote to him : “ You have had an excellent critic in Allingham—as far as I can judge. I mean that I would hardly desire for myself, in looking over the poems, to do more than *ink* all his *pencil*. But—as a reader or taster for the public—I should wish to find more fault than he has done, and to plead with you in all cases for entire clearness of modern and unantiquated expression. . . . I think the book will be an interesting and popular one, if you will rid it from crudities.”

It is not generally known that Dante Rossetti was largely indebted to his brother, William, for valuable help while the book was nearing completion.¹

¹ “ Could you help me at all, do you think, in collating my *Vita Nuova* with the original, and amending inaccuracies, of which I am sure there are some ? I have so much to do that I am tempted to bore you with it if you can and will ” (Letter of Jan. 18, 1861).—“ Many thanks. What I want is that you should correct my translation throughout, removing inaccuracies and mannerisms. And, if you have time, it would be a great service to translate the analyses of the poems (which I omitted). This, however, if you think it desirable to include them. I did not at the time (on ground of readableness), but since think they may be desirable, only have become so unfamiliar with the book that I have no distinct opinion. I enclose in the MS. some notes by Saffi which may prove useful ” (Letter of Jan. 19, 1861).—“ Many and many thanks for a most essential service most thoroughly performed. I have not yet verified the whole of the notes, but I see they are just what I needed, and will save me a vast

About this time, too, Ruskin's interest took the practical shape of inducing him to advance £100, by way of guarantee, to the publishers. At last the book appeared—*The Early Italian Poets together with Dante's Vita Nuova*—prefaced by the dedication: *Whatever is mine in this Book is inscribed to my Wife.* D. G. R. 1861. Of the utmost importance to every reader of Rossetti's versions is the passage in which he sets forth, with great clearness and real distinction of style, his theory of translation:

“The life-blood of rhythmical translation is this commandment,—that a good poem shall not be turned into a bad one. The only true motive for putting poetry into a fresh language must be to endow a fresh nation, as far as possible, with one more possession of beauty. Poetry not being an exact science, literalness of rendering is altogether secondary to this chief law. I say *literalness*,—not fidelity, which is by no means the same thing. When literalness can be combined with

amount of trouble. I should very much wish that the translation were more literal, but cannot do it all again” (Letter of Jan. 25, 1861).—This debt was publicly acknowledged in a foot-note on p. 201 of the 1st edition: “I may here also acknowledge my obligations to my brother for valuable suggestions and assistance in the course of my present work.”

what is thus the primary condition of success, the translator is fortunate, and must strive his utmost to unite them; when such object can only be attained by paraphrase, that is his only path. Any merit possessed by these translations is derived from an effort to follow this principle. . . . That there are many defects in this collection, or that the above merit is its defect, or that it has no merits but only defects, are discoveries so sure to be made if necessary (or perhaps here and there in any case), that I may safely leave them in other hands. . . . Of the difficulties I have had to encounter,—the causes of imperfections for which I have no other excuse,—it is the reader's best privilege to remain ignorant; but I may perhaps be pardoned for briefly referring to such among these as concern the exigencies of translation. The task of the translator (and with all humility be it spoken) is one of some self-denial. Often would he avail himself of any special grace of his own idiom and epoch, if only his will belonged to him: often would some cadence serve him but for his author's structure—some structure but for his author's cadence: often the beautiful turn of a stanza must be weakened to adopt some rhyme which will tally, and he sees the poet revelling in abundance of language where himself is scantily

supplied. Now he would slight the matter for the music, and now the music for the matter ; but no,—he must deal to each alike. Sometimes too a flaw in the work galls him, and he would fain remove it, doing for the poet that which his age denied him ; but no,—it is not in the bond. His path is like that of Aladdin through the enchanted vaults : many are the precious fruits and flowers which he must pass by unheeded in search for the lamp alone ; happy if at last, when brought to light, it does not prove that his old lamp has been exchanged for a new one,—glittering indeed to the eye, but scarcely of the same virtue nor with the same genius at its summons. . . . I trust that from this [his early Dante associations—the passage is quoted above, p. xxxvi] the reader may place more confidence in a work not carelessly undertaken, though produced in the spare-time of other pursuits more closely followed. He should perhaps be told that it has occupied the leisure moments of not a few years ; thus affording, often at long intervals, every opportunity for consideration and revision ; and that on the score of care, at least, he has no need to mistrust it. Nevertheless, I know there is no great stir to be made by launching afresh, on high-seas busy with new traffic, the ships which have been

long out-stripped and the ensigns which are grown strange."

There is real pathos in this closing passage, if we reflect with what loving care the poet had devoted himself to his task since his seventeenth year—he was now thirty-three. As for the success of the book with the general public, it may be termed moderate; certainly the reception was not enthusiastic.¹ But poets and men of letters hailed it with delight. On May 21, 1861, Coventry Patmore wrote: "A thousand thanks for what I see at a glance is one of the very few really precious books in the English or any other language. It seems to me to be the first time that a translator has proved himself, by his translations alone, to be a *great* poet." In the same month Ruskin expressed himself as "delighted with the book"—and he was a hard critic to please, especially where Rossetti was concerned. Some ten years later, when Mr. Swinburne was reviewing Rossetti's poems,² he said in his enthusiastic way: "All Mr. Rossetti's translations bear the same evidence of a power not merely beyond reach but

¹ The indefatigable William states that "by 1869 about 600 copies of it had been sold; and the profits covered the £100 of Mr. Ruskin, and a minute dole of less than £9 to Rossetti. A few copies, 64, still remained on hand" (*Memoir*, p. 216).

² *Fortnightly Review*, May 1870.

beyond attempt of other artists in language." And there is every indication that the verdict of Patmore and Swinburne will stand the test of time.

The "Vita Nuova" in England and America from 1862-1907.—Rossetti's classic version did not, then, make any immediate impression, nor did Norton's complete rendering which appeared at Boston in 1867.¹ Though appreciation of the *Commedia* was growing in every country, the *Vita Nuova* was not yet understood. In 1873 was published a second edition of Rossetti's version, which was now (somewhat unhappily) called *Dante and his Circle*, but had undergone scarcely any other change.² It seems highly probable that the demand

¹ There is no need to praise again this performance—admirable alike as a translation and for its notes and essays. When Dr. Garnett in 1896 dedicated his 124 sonnets to Prof. Norton he was fully justified in calling him, in the widest sense of the word, "the first commentator in English on the *Vita Nuova*."

² The order of Parts I and II was reversed, which was scarcely an improvement. On March 7, 1873, Rossetti wrote to his mother: "This time I am calling the book *Dante and his Circle* to direct attention primarily to its Dantesque relation"; and on March 27: "I am meaning to dedicate to you the new edition of my *Italian Poets*. The first was dedicated to poor Lizzy, and I had some thought of retaining the dedication with date; but this seeming perhaps rather forced, I shall substitute your dear name in the second edition." The actual inscription runs: "To

for this new edition was due to the personality of the translator, who was engrossing more and more attention, both as painter and as poet, rather than to any general desire to read the early Italian poets. Dean Plumptre's attempt to render the whole of Dante's poetry into English verse was courageous rather than successful (1887). The next to enter the lists was Dr. Moore, whose article on *Beatrice* (Edinburgh Review, July, 1891) was marked by sound scholarship; he discusses the whole literature of the subject.¹ In 1892 the Chiswick Press issued a handsome edition of the text with an introduction by Ralph Radcliffe-Whitehead, which is good so far as it goes. In the following year Prof. Perini, who held the same chair at King's College as had been occupied by Rossetti's father, edited the Italian text, with English notes consisting largely of renderings. In 1895 Mr. and Miss Hornby printed at their Ashendene Press a limited edition of Dante's text; the work is beautifully carried out, but it would have been better to exclude anything in the nature of commentary rather than print a few short extracts from Villani and L. Bruni. In the same year

my Mother I dedicate this new edition of a book prized by her love."

¹ See above, footnote on p. x.

G. C. Boswell published a very fair literal prose rendering (with a few samples of verse at the end) and adequately introduced. Dr. Garnett's version of 124 Italian and Portuguese sonnets (1896) include some particularly happy examples from the *Vita Nuova*.¹ In July 1896 the *Quarterly Review* published an article on the *Vita Nuova* by Professor John Earle, distinguished in other paths of scholarship. The novelty of the views expressed aroused considerable interest and discussion at the time, and the paper was translated into Italian.² We have already (see

¹ Here is his version of the sonnet *Tanto Gentile*, which is superior to most of those given in Appendix IV:

So goodly and so seemly doth appear
My Lady, when she doth a greeting bring,
That tongue is stayed, silent and quivering,
And eye adventures not to look on her.
She thence departeth, of her land aware,
Meek in humility's apparelling;
And men esteem her as a heavenly thing
Sent down to earth a marvel to declare.
Whoso regardeth so delightedly
Beholds, his eyes into his heart instil
Sweet only to be known by tasting it;
And from her face invisibly doth flit
A gentle spirit Love doth wholly fill,
That to the soul is ever saying, Sigh.

² In the *Biblioteca storico-critica della lett. dantesca* (ed. by Passerini and Papa), No. XI (Bologna, 1899).—Though entirely dissenting from the author's opinions, I consider

above, p. xv) had occasion to refer to Lewis F. Mott's *System of Courtly Love, studied as an introduction to the Vita Nuova of Dante* (Boston, 1896), a treatise of no little merit, which would have been still more useful if

that their originality entitles them to a hearing: "The sum of our conclusions is this: that the *Vita Nuova* is an allegorical story of the conflict of Faith and Science, and that in this conflict lies its issues and its veritable meaning. The outer form of the story has been determined by a motive of a more superficial kind—the artistic motive—which required that Beatrice should be furnished with an historical record to qualify her for her destined place in the *Commedia*. The *Vita Nuova* and the *Commedia* represent one train of thought, of which the chief summits may be verified in *Inferno* I and II; *Purgatorio* XXX ff.; *Paradiso* X and XXX and XXXIII. The *Vita Nuova* contains, but hides under a realistic story of love, Dante's vacillations in regard to the chief question of the era in which he lived. As Virtue and Pleasure competed for the moral possession of Hercules, so Faith and Science disputed the intellectual allegiance of the pilgrim of the thirteenth century. And this conclusion is quite unaffected by the question whether the love of Dante for Beatrice was real or fictitious. Our argument leaves room for every variety of opinion upon that subject; it is a subject wholly external to the spring and source of the *Vita Nuova*, whether she was or was not a real person; and if so, whether she was a woman whom he loved, or whether she was to him only some bright peculiar star; or thirdly, whether she did but furnish a name to him—in all cases alike, it appears that she was added for poetical imagery after the *Commedia* had been outlined in the poet's mind."

it had been based on a wider knowledge of the troubadours. The same author had in 1892 published at New York a suggestive essay in interpretation, *Dante and Beatrice*. In 1897 Prof. O. Kuhns reprinted at New York Cary's *Vision* together with Rossetti's *New Life*, but his own contributions to the volume are not very illuminating. On the other hand, America, in the person of Mr. Fitz-Roy Carrington, did an excellent piece of work by issuing *The New Life of Dante Alighieri. Translation and Pictures by D. G. Rossetti* (New York, 1901). This was an admirable notion, the only wonder being that it had not occurred to any one in England.¹ Moreover, Mr. Carrington's introduction is full of sound matter, and contains a particularly happy parallel between Beatrice and Mrs. Rossetti. In 1902 Phœbe Anna Traquair published at Edinburgh a photographic reproduction of an

¹ Italy soon followed suit (1902) with a volume to which A. Agresti, the son-in-law of W. M. Rossetti, contributed an introduction—*La Vita Nuova di Dante e i quadri di D. G. Rossetti*. England came next, in 1904, Mr. W. M. Rossetti being responsible for the foreword. He had also contributed one to the American volume. In 1906 was published in London a 'photogravure edition' of Rossetti's *New Life* with a few of his illustrations not particularly well chosen. In the same year the idea was successfully adopted in Germany by Hauser (see above, p. xviii, footnote).

illuminated manuscript, which had been designed by herself, with varying success, in the medieval style, and contained the *Vita Nuova*, the lyrics being given in Norton's version.¹ The translation of the *Vita Nuova* published in 1902 by Frances de Meÿ was scarcely called for, as she cannot be said to equal Martin or Rossetti or Norton; however, the little book is charmingly produced and contains some happy touches. Miss Emily Underdown (who has written on Dante as "Norley Chester") issued a harmless little play based on the *Vita Nuova* and called *Dante and Beatrice* (1903), which has found some favour with amateurs.² In the same year the *Vita Nuova* was edited, in Italian and English, by Prof. L. Ricci, another successor of Gabriele Rossetti at King's College. The little book, which does not aim at superseding its predecessors and is not annotated, was the work of various members of the Dante Society and does not call for serious criticism. A third publication of the year was the valuable paper on *The Symmetrical Structure of Dante's*

¹ Though she preferred this to Rossetti's rendering she evidently admires the latter's poetry, as she has since produced *The House of Life* in the same way (Edinburgh, 1904).

² Miss Rosina Filippi was more ambitious, but her *Beatrice* play, produced at the Court Theatre on May 29, 1905, was not a success.

Vita Nuova, by Kenneth McKenzie, in which the various theories are carefully examined.¹ In 1904 Mr. Edmund G. Gardner edited Rossetti's *Early Italian Poets*² for the *Temple Classics*; he wrote many admirable notes for the book, but somewhat neglected the *Vita Nuova*. Towards the end of 1906 a prose version of the *Vita Nuova* by Mr. Okey was added to the same series (in a volume that also contains a prose rendering of the *Canzoniere* by Mr. Wicksteed). These two scholars are jointly responsible for the notes to the *Vita Nuova* which give proof of much original thought and diligent research.

It will be seen that during the last fifteen years the study of the *Vita Nuova* has attained considerable proportions in English-speaking lands—more so, indeed, than would appear from the foregoing list, as no notice has been taken of new editions. The versions of Norton, of Martin and Rossetti, especially the latter, have been re-issued several times.³ The present edition

¹ We are indebted to this article for our knowledge of Gabriele Rossetti's division of the *Vita Nuova* (see above, p. xxii). It is printed in the Publications of the Modern Language Association of America, vol. xviii, No. 3 (Baltimore, July 1903), pp. 341-355.

² Two other reprints of this volume appeared in the same year, but without any editorial work.

³ Dr. Paget Toynbee pointed out in the *Athenæum* of
lviii

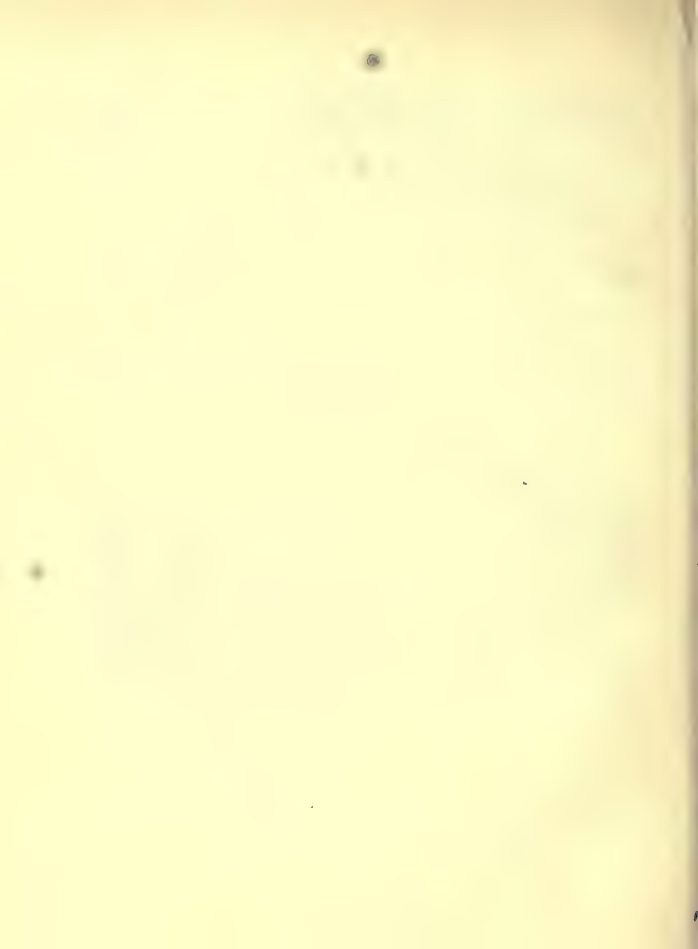
is distinguished from other reprints of Rossetti's *New Life* by the presence of the Italian text, which will enable students to realise the beauties of the translation even when it departs from its original.

The *Vita Nuova*, the natural introduction to the *Commedia*, is usually read after it. If, however, this little volume falls into the hands of any one not already familiar with the greater work, it is the earnest hope of the present editor that it may lead to the serious study of that stupendous poem, the literary masterpiece of the Middle Ages.

H. O.

OXFORD, *December* 1907.

Jan. 12, 1907, that a text and English version of the *Vita Nuova* appeared at Florence in 1906, bearing on the title-page the words *trascritta e illustrata da A. Razzolini*; and that the rendering used is that of Rossetti, though his name appears nowhere in the book. Somewhat less flagrant is the case of the volume *Notes on the Vita Nuova and Minor Poems of Dante, together with the New Life and many of the poems, by the author of "Remarks on the Sonnets of Shakespeare, etc."* (New York, 1866); for here Rossetti's name does at least figure once in the text as the translator of the *Vita Nuova*.



LA VITA NUOVA

LA VITA NUOVA

IN quella parte del libro della mia memoria, dinanzi alla quale poco si potrebbe leggere, si trova una rubrica, la quale dice : “*Incipit Vita Nova.*” Sotto la quale rubrica io trovo scritte molte cose e le parole, le quali è mio intendimento d’assemprare in questo libello ; e se non tutte, almeno la loro sentenza.



Nove fiate già, appresso al mio nascimento, era tornato lo cielo della luce quasi ad un medesimo punto, quanto alla sua propria girazione, quando alli miei occhi apparve prima la gloriosa donna della mia mente, la quale fu chiamata da molti Beatrice, i quali non sapeano che si chiamare. Ella era già in questa vita stata tanto, che nel suo tempo lo cielo stellato era

THE NEW LIFE

IN that part of the book of my memory before the which is little that can be read, there is a rubric, saying, "Here beginneth the New Life." Under such rubric I find written many things ; and among them the words which I purpose to copy into this little book ; if not all of them, at the least their substance.



Nine times already since my birth had the heaven of light returned to the selfsame point almost, as concerns its own revolution, when first the glorious Lady of my mind was made manifest to mine eyes ; even she who was called Beatrice by many who knew not wherefore. She had already been in this life for so long as that, within her time, the starry heaven had

mosso verso la parte d' oriente delle dodici parti
 l' una d' un grado : sì che quasi dal principio del
 suo anno nono apparve a me, ed io la vidi quasi
 alla fine del mio nono anno. Ella apparvemi
 vestita di nobilissimo colore, umile ed onesto
 sanguigno, cinta ed ornata alla guisa che alla sua
 giovanissima etade si convenia. In quel punto
 dico veracemente che lo spirito della vita, lo quale
 dimora nella segretissima camera del cuore, cominciò
 a tremare sì fortemente, che apparia ne' menomi
 polsi orribilmente ; e tremando disse queste parole :
 "*Ecce Deus fortior me, qui veniens dominabitur mihi.*"
 In quel punto lo spirito animale, il quale dimora
 nell' alta camera, nella quale tutti li spiriti sensitivi
 portano le loro percezioni, si cominciò a mara-
 vigliare molto, e parlando specialmente alli spiriti
 del viso, disse queste parole : "*Apparuit jam beatitudo
 vestra.*" In quel punto lo spirito naturale, il
 quale dimora in quella parte, ove si ministra
 lo nutrimento nostro, cominciò a piangere, e
 piangendo disse queste parole : "*Heu miser ! quia
 frequenter impeditus ero deinceps.*" D' allora innanzi
 dico ch' Amore signoreggiò l' anima mia, la
 quale fu sì tosto a lui disposata, e cominciò a
 prendere sopra me tanta sicurtade e tanta signoria, per

moved towards the Eastern quarter one of the twelve parts of a degree : so that she appeared to me at the beginning of her ninth year almost, and I saw her almost at the end of my ninth year. Her dress, on that day, was of a most noble colour, a subdued and goodly crimson, girdled and adorned in such sort as best suited with her very tender age. At that moment, I say most truly that the spirit of life, which hath its dwelling in the secretest chamber of the heart, began to tremble so violently that the least pulses of my body shook therewith ; and in trembling it said these words : “ Here is a deity stronger than I ; who, coming, shall rule over me.” At that moment the animate spirit, which dwelleth in the lofty chamber whither all the senses carry their perceptions, was filled with wonder, and speaking more especially unto the spirits of the eyes, said these words : “ Your beatitude hath now been made manifest unto you.” At that moment the natural spirit, which dwelleth there where our nourishment is administered, began to weep, and in weeping said these words : “ Alas ! how often shall I be disturbed from this time forth.” I say that, from that time forward, Love quite governed my soul ; which was immediately espoused to him, and with so safe and undisputed a lordship, (by

la virtù che gli dava la mia imaginazione, che mi convenia fare compiutamente tutti i suoi piaceri. Egli mi comandava molte volte, che io cercassi per vedere quest' angiola giovanissima : ond' io nella mia puerizia molte fiate l' andai cercando ; e vedeala di sì nobili e laudabili portamenti, che certo di lei si potea dire quella parola del poeta Omero : “Ella non pare figliuola d' uomo mortale, ma di Dio.” Ed avvegna che la sua immagine, la quale continuamente meco stava, fosse baldanza d' amore a signoreggiarmi, tuttavia era di sì nobile virtù, che nulla volta sofferse che Amore mi reggesse senza il fedele consiglio della ragione in quelle cose là dove cotal consiglio fosse utile a udire. E però che soprastare alle passioni ed atti di tanta gioventudine pare alcuno parlare fabuloso, mi partirò da esse ; e trapassando molte cose, le quali si potrebbero trarre dall' esempio onde nascono queste, verrò a quelle parole, le quali sono scritte nella mia memoria sotto maggiori paragrafi.



Poichè furono passati tanti dì, che appunto erano

virtue of strong imagination) that I had nothing left for it but to do all his bidding continually. He oftentimes commanded me to seek if I might see this youngest of the Angels : wherefore I in my boyhood often went in search of her, and found her so noble and praiseworthy that certainly of her might have been said those words of the poet Homer, "She seemed not to be the daughter of a mortal man, but of God." And albeit her image, that was with me always, was an exultation of Love to subdue me, it was yet of so perfect a quality that it never allowed me to be overruled by Love without the faithful counsel of reason, whensoever such counsel was useful to be heard. But seeing that were I to dwell over-much on the passions and doings of such early youth, my words might be counted something fabulous, I will therefore put them aside ; and passing many things that may be conceived by the pattern of these, I will come to such as are writ in my memory with a better distinctness.



After the lapse of so many days that nine years

compiuti li nove anni appresso l' apparimento sopra-
scritto di questa gentilissima, nell' ultimo di questi di
avvenne, che questa mirabile donna apparve a me ve-
stita di colore bianchissimo, in mezzo di due gentili
donne, le quali erano di più lunga etade; e passando
per una via volse gli occhi verso quella parte ov' io era
molto pauroso; e per la sua ineffabile cortesia, la
quale è oggi meritata nel grande secolo, mi salutò vir-
tuosamente tanto, che mi parve allora vedere tutti i
termini della beatitudine. L' ora, che lo suo dolcissi-
mo salutare mi giunse, era fermamente nona di quel
giorno: e però che quella fu la prima volta che le
sue parole si mossero per venire a' miei orecchi,
presi tanta dolcezza, che come inebriato mi partii
dalle genti. E ricorsi al solingo luogo d' una mia
camera, e puosimi a pensare di questa cortesissima;
e pensando di lei, mi sopraggiunse un soave sonno,
nel quale m' apparve una maravigliosa visione:
che mi pareva vedere nella mia camera una nebula
di colore di fuoco, dentro dalla quale io discerneva
una figura d' uno signore, di pauroso aspetto a
chi lo guardasse: e pareami con tanta letizia,
quanto a sè, che mirabil cosa era: e nelle sue
parole dicea molte cose, le quali io non intendea
se non poche; tra le quali io intendea queste: "*Ego*

exactly were completed since the above-written appearance of this most gracious being, on the last of those days it happened that the same wonderful lady appeared to me dressed all in pure white, between two gentle ladies elder than she. And passing through a street, she turned her eyes thither where I stood sorely abashed : and by her unspeakable courtesy, which is now guerdoned in the Great Cycle, she saluted me with so virtuous a bearing that I seemed then and there to behold the very limits of blessedness. The hour of her most sweet salutation was certainly the ninth of that day ; and because it was the first time that any words from her reached mine ears, I came into such sweetness that I parted thence as one intoxicated. And betaking me to the loneliness of mine own room, I fell to thinking of this most courteous lady, thinking of whom I was overtaken by a pleasant slumber, wherein a marvellous vision was presented to me : for there appeared to be in my room a mist of the colour of fire, within the which I discerned the figure of a lord of terrible aspect to such as should gaze upon him, but who seemed therewithal to rejoice inwardly that it was a marvel to see. Speaking he said many things, among the which I could understand but few ; and of these, this : “ I

dominus tuus.” Nelle sue braccia mi pareva vedere una persona dormire nuda, salvo che involta mi pareva in un drappo sanguigno leggermente ; la quale io riguardando molto intentivamente, conobbi ch’ era la donna della salute, la quale m’ avea lo giorno dinanzi degnato di salutare. E nell’ una delle mani mi pareva che questi tenesse una cosa, la quale ardesse tutta ; e pareami che mi dicesse queste parole : “*Vide cor tuum.*” E quando egli era stato alquanto, pareami che disvegliasse questa che dormia ; e tanto si sforzava per suo ingegno, che le facea mangiare quella cosa che in mano gli ardeva, la quale ella mangiava dubitosamente. Appresso ciò, poco dimorava che la sua letizia si convertia in amarissimo pianto : e così piangendo si ricogliea questa donna nelle sue braccia, e con essa mi pareva che se ne gisse verso il cielo: ond’ io sostenea sì grande angoscia, che lo mio deboletto sonno non potè sostenere, anzi si ruppe, e fui disvegliato. Ed immantinente cominciai a pensare ; e trovai che l’ ora, nella quale m’ era questa visione apparita, era stata la quarta della notte : sì che appare manifestamente, ch’ ella fu la prima ora delle nove ultime ore della notte. E pensando io a ciò che m’ era apparito, proposi di farlo sentire a molti, i quali erano famosi trovatori in quel tempo: e con ciò fosse cosa ch’ io avessi già veduto per me medesimo l’ arte del dire parole per rima, proposi di fare un

am thy master." In his arms it seemed to me that a person was sleeping, covered only with a blood-coloured cloth ; upon whom looking very attentively, I knew that it was the lady of the salutation who had deigned the day before to salute me. And he who held her held also in his hand a thing that was burning in flames ; and he said to me, "Behold thy heart." But when he had remained with me a little while, I thought that he set himself to awaken her that slept ; after the which he made her to eat that thing which flamed in his hand ; and she ate as one fearing. Then, having waited again a space, all his joy was turned into most bitter weeping ; and as he wept he gathered the lady into his arms, and it seemed to me that he went with her up towards heaven : whereby such a great anguish came upon me that my light slumber could not endure through it, but was suddenly broken.] And immediately having considered, I knew that the hour wherein this vision had been made manifest to me was the fourth hour (which is to say, the first of the nine last hours) of the night. Then, musing on what I had seen, I proposed to relate the same to many poets who were famous in that day : and for that I had myself in some sort the art of discoursing with rhyme, I resolved on making a

sonetto, nel quale io salutassi tutti i fedeli
d' Amore, e pregandoli che giudicassero la
mia visione, scrissi loro ciò ch' io avea nel
mio sonno veduto; e cominciai allora questo
sonetto :

A ciascun' alma presa, e gentil core,
Nel cui cospetto viene il dir presente,
A ciò che mi riscrivan suo parvente,
Salute in lor signor, cioè Amore.
Già eran quasi ch' atterzate l' ore
Del tempo che ogni stella è più lucente,
Quando m' apparve Amor subitamente,
Cui essenza membrar mi dà orrore.
Allegro mi sembrava Amor, tenendo
Mio core in mano, e nelle braccia avea
Madonna, involta in un drappo, dormendo.
Poi la svegliava, e d' esto core ardendo
Lei paventosa umilmente pascea :
Appresso gir lo ne vedea piangendo.

Questo sonetto si divide in due parti: nella prima parte saluto, e domando risponsione; nella seconda, signifco a che si dee rispondere. La seconda parte comincia quivi: "Già eran."

sonnet, in the which, having saluted all such as are subject unto Love, and entreated them to expound my vision, I should write unto them those things which I had seen in my sleep. And the sonnet I made was this :

To every heart which the sweet pain doth move,
And unto which these words may now be brought
For true interpretation and kind thought,
Be greeting in our Lord's name, which is Love.
Of those long hours wherein the stars, above,
Wake and keep watch, the third was almost nought
When Love was shown me with such terrors fraught
As may not carelessly be spoken of.
He seem'd like one who is full of joy, and had
My heart within his hand, and on his arm
My lady, with a mantle round her, slept ;
Whom (having waken'd her) anon he made
To eat that heart ; she ate, as fearing harm.
Then he went out ; and as he went, he wept

This sonnet is divided into two parts. In the first part I give greeting, and ask an answer ; in the second, I signify what thing has to be answered to. The second part commences here, "Of those long hours."

A questo sonetto fu risposto da molti e di diverse sentenze, tra li quali fu risponditore quegli, cui io chiamo primo de' miei amici ; e disse allora un sonetto lo quale comincia : “Vedesti al mio parere ogni valore.” E questo fu quasi il principio dell' amistà tra lui e me, quando egli seppe ch' io era quegli che gli avea ciò mandato. Lo verace giudizio del detto sogno non fu veduto allora per alcuno, ma ora è manifesto alli più semplici.



Da questa visione innanzi cominciò il mio spirito naturale ad essere impedito nella sua operazione, però che l' anima era tutta data nel pensare di questa gentilissima ; ond' io divenni in picciolo tempo poi di sì frale e debole condizione, che a molti amici pesava della mia vista : e molti pieni d' invidia si procacciavano di sapere di me quello ch' io voleva del tutto celare ad altrui. Ed io accorgendomi del malvagio domandare che mi faceano, per la volontà d' Amore, il quale mi comandava secondo il consiglio della ragione, rispondea loro, che Amore era quegli che così

To this sonnet I received many answers, conveying many different opinions ; of the which, one was sent by him whom I now call the first among my friends ; and it began thus, "Unto my thinking thou beheld'st all worth." And indeed, it was when he learned that I was he who had sent those rhymes to him, that our friendship commenced. But the true meaning of that vision was not then perceived by any one, though it be now evident to the least skilful.



From that night forth, the natural functions of my body began to be vexed and impeded, for I was given up wholly to thinking of this most gracious creature : whereby in short space I became so weak and so reduced that it was irksome to many of my friends to look upon me ; while others, being moved by spite, went about to discover what it was my wish should be concealed. Wherefore I, (perceiving the drift of their unkindly questions,) by Love's will, who directed me according to the counsels of reason, told them how it was Love himself who had thus

m' avea governato: dicea d' Amore, però che io portava nel viso tante delle sue insegne, che questo non si potea ricoprire. E quando mi domandavano: "Per cui t' ha così distrutto questo Amore?" ed io sorridendo li guardava, e nulla dicea loro.



Un giorno avvenne, che questa gentilissima sedea in parte, ove s' udivano parole della Regina della gloria, ed io era in luogo, dal quale vedea la mia beatitudine; e nel mezzo di lei e di me, per la retta linea, sedea una gentile donna di molto piacevole aspetto, la quale mi mirava spesso volte, maravigliandosi del mio sguardare, che pareva che sopra lei terminasse; onde molti s' accorsero del suo mirare. Ed in tanto vi fu posto mente, che, partendomi da questo luogo, mi sentii dire appresso: "Vedi come cotale donna distrugge la persona di costui." E nominandola, intesi che diceano di colei, che mezza era stata nella linea retta che movea dalla gentilissima Beatrice, e terminava negli occhi miei. Allora mi confortai molto, assicurandomi che il mio segreto non era comunicato, lo giorno, altrui per mia vista: ed immantinente

dealt with me : and I said so, because the thing was so plainly to be discerned in my countenance that there was no longer any means of concealing it. But when they went on to ask, "And by whose help hath Love done this ?" I looked in their faces smiling, and spake no word in return.



Now it fell on a day, that this most gracious creature was sitting where words were to be heard of the Queen of Glory ; and I was in a place whence mine eyes could behold their beatitude : and betwixt her and me, in a direct line, there sat another lady of a pleasant favour ; who looked round at me many times, marvelling at my continued gaze which seemed to have *her* for its object. And many perceived that she thus looked : so that departing thence, I heard it whispered after me, "Look you to what a pass *such a lady* hath brought him ;" and in saying this they named her who had been midway between the most gentle Beatrice, and mine eyes. Therefore I was reassured, and knew that for that day my secret had not become manifest. Then immediately it

Churc

pensai di fare di questa gentile donna schermo della veritate ; e tanto ne mostrai in poco di tempo, che il mio segreto fu creduto sapere dalle più persone che di me ragionavano. Con questa donna mi celai alquanti mesi ed anni ; e per più fare credente altrui, feci per lei certe cosette per rima, le quali non è mio intendimento di scrivere qui, se non in quanto facesse a trattare di quella gentilissima Beatrice ; e però le lascerò tutte, salvo che alcuna cosa ne scriverò, che pare che sia loda di lei.



Dico che in questo tempo, che questa donna era schermo di tanto amore, quanto dalla mia parte, mi venne una volontà di voler ricordare il nome di quella gentilissima, ed accompagnarlo di molti nomi di donne, e specialmente del nome di questa gentil-donna ; e presi i nomi di sessanta le più belle della cittade, ove la mia donna fu posta dall' altissimo Sire, e composi una epistola sotto forma di serventese, la quale io non scriverò : e non n' avrei fatto menzione

came into my mind that I might make use of this lady as a screen to the truth : and so well did I play my part that the most of those who had hitherto watched and wondered at me, now imagined they had found me out. By her means I kept my secret concealed till some years were gone over ; and for my better security, I even made divers rhymes in her honour ; whereof I shall here write only as much as concerneth the most gentle Beatrice, which is but a very little.



Moreover, about the same time while this lady was a screen for so much love on my part, I took the resolution to set down the name of this most gracious creature accompanied with many other women's names, and especially with hers whom I spake of. And to this end I put together the names of sixty the most beautiful ladies in that city where God had placed mine own lady ; and these names I introduced in an epistle in the form of a *sirvent*, which it is not my intention to transcribe here. Neither should I have said anything of this matter,

se non per dire quello, che componendola maravigliosamente addivenne, cioè che in alcuno altro numero non soffesse il nome della mia donna stare, se non in sul nove, tra' nomi di queste donne.



La donna, con la quale io avea tanto tempo celata la mia volontà, convenne che si partisse della sopradetta cittade, e andasse in paese lontano : per che io, quasi sbigottito della bella difesa che mi era venuta meno, assai me ne disconfortai più che io medesimo non avrei creduto dinanzi. E pensando che, se della sua partita io non parlassi alquanto dolorosamente, le persone sarebbero accorte più tosto del mio nascondere, proposi di farne alcuna lamentanza in un sonetto, il quale io scriverò ; perciò che la mia donna fu immediata cagione di certe parole, che nel sonetto sono, siccome appare a chi lo intende : e allora dissi questo sonetto :

O voi, che per la via d' Amor passate,
Attendete, e guardate
S' egli è dolore alcun, quanto il mio, grave :

did I not wish to take note of a certain strange thing, to wit : that having written the list, I found my lady's name would not stand otherwise than ninth in order among the names of these ladies.



Now it so chanced with her by whose means I had thus long time concealed my desire, that it behoved her to leave the city I speak of, and to journey afar : wherefore I, being sorely perplexed at the loss of so excellent a defence, had more trouble than even I could before have supposed. And thinking that if I spoke not somewhat mournfully of her departure, my former counterfeiting would be the more quickly perceived, I determined that I would make a grievous sonnet thereof ; the which I will write here, because it hath certain words in it whereof my lady was the immediate cause, as will be plain to him that understands. And the sonnet was this :

All ye that pass along Love's trodden way,
Pause ye awhile and say
If there be any grief like unto mine :

E priego sol, ch' audir mi sofferiate ;
E poi immaginate
S' io son d' ogni tormento ostello e chiave.

Amor, non già per mia poca bontate,
Ma per sua nobiltate,
Mi pose in vita sì dolce e soave,
Ch' io mi sentia dir dietro assai fiate.
Deh ! per qual dignitate
Così leggiadro questi lo cor have !

Ora ho perduta tutta mia baldanza,
Che si movea d' amoroso tesoro ;
Ond' io pover dimoro
In guisa, che di dir mi vien dottanza.

Sì che, volendo far come coloro,
Che per vergogna celan lor mancanza,
Di fuor mostro allegrezza,
E dentro dallo cor mi struggo e ploro.

Questo sonetto ha due parti principali : chè nella prima intendo chiamare i fedeli d' Amore per quelle parole di Geremia profeta : “ O vos omnes, qui transitis per viam, attendite et videte, si est dolor sicut dolor meus ;” e pregare che mi sofferino d' udire. Nella seconda narro là ove Amore m' avea posto, con altro intendimento che

I pray you that you hearken a short space
Patiently, if my case
Be not a piteous marvel and a sign.

Love (never, certes, for my worthless part,
But of his own great heart,)
Vouchsafed to me a life so calm and sweet
That oft I heard folk question as I went
What such great gladness meant :—
They spoke of it behind me in the street.

But now that fearless bearing is all gone
Which with Love's hoarded wealth was given me ;
Till I am grown to be
So poor that I have dread to think thereon.

And thus it is that I, being like as one
Who is ashamed and hides his poverty,
Without seem full of glee,
And let my heart within travail and moan.

This poem has two principal parts ; for, in the first, I mean to call the Faithful of Love in those words of Jeremias the Prophet, " Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by ? behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow," and to pray them to stay and hear me. In the second, I tell where Love had placed me, with a meaning other than that

l' estreme parti del sonetto non mostrano : e dico ciò che io ho perduto. La seconda parte comincia quivi : “ Amor non già.”



Appresso il partire di questa gentildonna, fu piacere del Signore degli angeli di chiamare alla sua gloria una donna giovane e di gentile aspetto molto, la quale fu assai graziosa in questa sopraddetta cittade ; lo cui corpo io vidi giacere senza l' anima in mezzo di molte donne, le quali piangevano assai pietosamente. Allora, ricordandomi che già l' avea veduta fare compagnia a quella gentilissima, non potei sostenere alquante lagrime ; anzi piangendo mi proposi di dire alquante parole della sua morte in guiderdone di ciò, che alcuna fiata l' avea veduta con la mia donna. E di ciò toccai alcuna cosa nell' ultima parte delle parole che io ne dissi, siccome appare manifestamente a chi le intende : e dissi allora questi due sonetti, dei quali comincia il primo “ Piangete amanti ; ” il secondo “ Morte villana. ”

Piangete, amanti, poichè piange Amore,
Udendo qual cagion lui fa plorare :
Amor sente a pietà donne chiamare,
Mostrando amaro duol per gli occhi fuore ;

which the last part of the poem shows, and I say what I have lost. The second part begins here : " Love (never, certes)."



A certain while after the departure of that lady, it pleased the Master of the Angels to call into His glory a damsel, young and of a gentle presence, who had been very lovely in the city I speak of : and I saw her body lying without its soul among many ladies, who held a pitiful weeping. Whereupon, remembering that I had seen her in the company of excellent Beatrice, I could not hinder myself from a few tears ; and weeping, I conceived to say somewhat of her death, in guerdon of having seen her some-while with my lady ; which thing I spake of in the latter end of the verses that I writ in this matter, as he will discern who understands. And I wrote two sonnets, which are these :

Weep, Lovers, sith Love's very self doth weep,
And sith the cause for weeping is so great ;
When now so many dames, of such estate
In worth, show with their eyes a grief so deep :

Perchè villana morte in gentil core
Ha messo il suo crudele adoperare,
Guastando ciò che al mondo è da lodare
In gentil donna, fuora dell' onore.
Udite quant' Amor le fece orranza ;
Ch' io 'l vidi lamentare in forma vera
Sovra la morta immagine avvenente ;
E riguardava invêr lo ciel sovente,
Ove l' alma gentil già locata era,
Che donna fu di sì gaia sembianza.

Questo primo sonetto si divide in tre parti. Nella prima chiamo e sollecito i fedeli d' Amore a piangere ; e dico che lo signore loro piange, e che udendo la cagione perch' e' piange, si acconcino più ad ascoltarmi ; nella seconda narro la cagione ; nella terza parlo d' alcuno onore, che Amore fece a questa donna. La seconda parte comincia quivi : " Amor sente ; " la terza quivi : " Udite."

Morte villana, di pietà nemica,
Di dolor madre antica,
Giudizio incontrastabile, gravoso,
Poi c' hai data materia al cor doglioso,
Ond' io vado pensoso,
Di te biasmar la lingua s' affatica.

For Death the churl has laid his leaden sleep
Upon a damsel who was fair of late,
Defacing all our earth should celebrate,—
Yea all save virtue, which the soul doth keep.
Now hearken how much Love did honour her.
I myself saw him in his proper form
Bending above the motionless sweet dead,
And often gazing into Heaven ; for there
The soul now sits which when her life was warm
Dwelt with the joyful beauty that is fled.

This first sonnet is divided into three parts. In the first, I call and beseech the Faithful of Love to weep ; and I say that their Lord weeps, and that they, hearing the reason why he weeps, shall be more minded to listen to me. In the second, I relate this reason. In the third, I speak of honour done by Love to this Lady. The second part begins here, “ When now so many dames ; ” the third here, “ Now hearken.”

Death, alway cruel, Pity's foe in chief,
Mother who brought forth grief,
Merciless judgement and without appeal !
Since thou alone hast made my heart to feel
This sadness and unweal,
My tongue upbraideth thee without relief.

E se di grazia ti vo' far mendica,
Convenesi ch' io dica
Lo tuo fallir, d' ogni torto tortoso ;
Non però che alla gente sia nascoso,
Ma per farne cruccioso
Chi d' Amor per innanzi si nutrica.

Dal secolo hai partita cortesia,
E, ciò che 'n donna è da pregiar, virtute :
In gaia gioventute
Distrutta hai l' amorosa leggiadria.

Più non vo' scoprìr qual donna sia,
Che per le proprietà sue conosciute :
Chi non merta salute,
Non sperì mai d' aver sua compagnia.

*Questo sonetto si divide in quattro parti : nella prima
chiamo la Morte per certi suoi nomi propri ; nella seconda
parlando a lei, dico la ragione perch' io mi movo a biasi-
marla ; nella terza la vitupero ; nella quarta mi volgo a
parlare a indiffinita persona, avvegna che quanto al mio
intendimento sia diffinita. La seconda parte comincia quivi :
“ Poi c' hai data ; ” la terza quivi : “ E se di grazia ; ”
la quarta quivi : “ Chi non merta.”*



And now (for I must rid thy name of ruth)
Behoves me speak the truth
Touching thy cruelty and wickedness :
Not that they be not known ; but ne'ertheless
I would give hate more stress
With them that feed on love in very sooth.

Out of this world thou hast driven courtesy,
And virtue, dearly prized in womanhood ;
And out of youth's gay mood
The lovely lightness is quite gone through thee.

Whom now I mourn, no man shall learn from me
Save by the measure of these praises given.
Whoso deserves not Heaven
May never hope to have her company.

This poem is divided into four parts. In the first I address Death by certain proper names of hers. In the second, speaking to her, I tell the reason why I am moved to denounce her. In the third, I rail against her. In the fourth, I turn to speak to a person undefined, although defined in my own conception. The second part commences here, "Since thou alone;" the third here, "And now (for I must);" the fourth here, "Whoso deserves not."



Appresso la morte di questa donna alquanti dì, avvenne cosa, per la quale mi convenne partire della sopradetta cittade, ed ire verso quelle parti, ov' era la gentil donna ch' era stata mia difesa, avvegna che non tanto lontano fosse lo termine del mio andare, quanto ella era. E tutto che io fossi alla compagnia di molti, quanto alla vista, l' andare mi dispiacea sì, che quasi li sospiri non poteano disfogare l' angoscia, che il cuore sentia, però ch' io mi dilungava dalla mia beatitudine. E però lo dolcissimo signore, il quale mi signoreggiava per virtù della gentilissima donna, nella mia immaginazione apparve come peregrino leggermente vestito, e di vili drappi. Egli mi pareva sbigottito, e guardava la terra, salvo che talvolta mi pareva, che li suoi occhi si volgessero ad uno fiume bello, corrente e chiarissimo, il quale sen già lungo questo cammino là ove io era. A me parve che Amore mi chiamasse, e dicessemi queste parole: "Io vengo da quella donna, la quale è stata lunga tua difesa, e so che il suo rivenire non sarà; e però quel cuore ch' io ti facea avere da lei, io l' ho meco, e portolo a donna, la quale sarà tua difensione come questa era;" (e nomollami sì ch' io la conobbi bene). "Ma tuttavia di queste parole, ch' io t' ho ragionate, se alcune ne dicessi, dille per modo che per

Some days after the death of this lady, I had occasion to leave the city I speak of, and to go thitherwards where she abode who had formerly been my protection ; albeit the end of my journey reached not altogether so far. And notwithstanding that I was visibly in the company of many, the journey was so irksome that I had scarcely sighing enough to ease my heart's heaviness ; seeing that as I went, I left my beatitude behind me. Wherefore it came to pass that he who ruled me by virtue of my most gentle lady was made visible to my mind, in the light habit of a traveller, coarsely fashioned. He appeared to me troubled, and looked always on the ground ; saving only that sometimes his eyes were turned towards a river which was clear and rapid, and which flowed along the path I was taking. And then I thought that Love called me and said to me these words : “ I come from that lady who was so long thy surety ; for the matter of whose return, I know that it may not be. Wherefore I have taken that heart which I made thee leave with her, and do bear it unto another lady, who, as she was, shall be thy surety ; ” (and when he named her, I knew her well.) “ And of these words I have spoken, if thou shouldst speak any again, let it be in such sort as that none

loro non si discernesse lo simulato amore che hai mostrato a questa, e che ti converrà mostrare ad altrui.” E dette queste parole, disparve tutta questa mia immaginazione subitamente, per la grandissima parte, che mi parve ch’ Amore mi desse di sè : e, quasi cambiato nella vista mia, cavalcai quel giorno pensoso molto, e accompagnato da molti sospiri. Appresso lo giorno cominciai questo sonetto :

Cavalcando l’ altr’ ier per un cammino,
Pensoso dell’ andar, che mi sgradia,
Trovai Amor nel mezzo della via,
In abito leggier di peregrino.
Nella sembianza mi pareva meschino
Come avesse perduto signoria ;
E sospirando pensoso venia,
Per non veder la gente, a capo chino.
Quando mi vide, mi chiamò per nome,
E disse : “ Io vegno di lontana parte,
Ov’ era lo tuo cor per mio volere ;
E recolo a servir novo piacere.”
Allora presi di lui sì gran parte,
Ch’ egli disparve, e non m’ accorsi come.

Questo sonetto ha tre parti : nella prima parte dico siccome io trovai Amore, e qual mi pareva ; nella seconda dico

shall perceive thereby that thy love was feigned for her, which thou must now feign for another." And when he had spoken thus, all my imagining was gone suddenly, for it seemed to me that Love became a part of myself : so that, changed as it were in mine aspect, I rode on full of thought the whole of that day, and with heavy sighing. And the day being over, I wrote this sonnet :

A day ago, as I rode sullenly
Upon a certain path that liked me not,
I met Love midway while the air was hot,
Clothed lightly as a wayfarer might be.
And for the cheer he show'd, he seem'd to me
As one who hath lost lordship he had got ;
Advancing tow'rds me full of sorrowful thought,
Bowing his forehead so that none should see.
Then as I went, he call'd me by my name,
Saying : " I journey since the morn was dim
Thence where I made thy heart to be : which now
I needs must bear unto another dame."
Wherewith so much pass'd into me of him
That he was gone, and I discern'd not how.

This sonnet has three parts. In the first part, I tell how I met Love and of his aspect. In the second, I tell

quello ch' egli mi disse, avvegna che non compiutamente, per tema ch' io avea di non iscovrire lo mio segreto ; nella terza dico com' egli disparve. La seconda comincia quivi : " Quando mi vide ; " la terza quivi : " Allora presi."



Appresso la mia tornata, mi misi a cercare di questa donna, che lo mio signore m' avea nominata nel cammino de' sospiri. Ed acciò che il mio parlare sia più breve, dico che in poco tempo la feci mia difesa tanto, che troppa gente ne ragionava oltra li termini della cortesia ; onde molte fiate mi pesava duramente. E per questa cagione, cioè di questa soverchievole voce, che pareva che m' infamasse viziosamente, quella gentilissima, la quale fu distruggitrice di tutti i vizii e regina delle virtù, passando per alcuna parte mi negò il suo dolcissimo salutare, nel quale stava tutta la mia beatitudine. Ed uscendo alquanto del proposito presente, voglio dare ad intendere quello che il suo salutare in me virtuosamente operava.



what he said to me, although not in full, through the fear I had of discovering my secret. In the third, I say how he disappeared. The second part commences here, "Then as I went;" the third here, "Wherewith so much."



On my return, I set myself to seek out that lady whom my master had named to me while I journeyed sighing. And because I would be brief, I will now narrate that in a short while I made her my surety, in such sort that the matter was spoken of by many in terms scarcely courteous; through the which I had oftenwhiles many troublesome hours. And by this it happened (to wit: by this false and evil rumour which seemed to misfame me of vice), that she who was the destroyer of all evil and the queen of all good, coming where I was, denied me her most sweet salutation, in the which alone was my blessedness. And here it is fitting for me to depart a little from this present matter, that it may be rightly understood of what surpassing virtue her salutation was to me.



Dico che quando ella apparia da parte alcuna, per la speranza dell' ammirabile salute nullo nemico mi rimaneva, anzi mi giungea una fiamma di caritate, la quale mi faceva perdonare a chiunque m' avesse offeso : e chi allora m' avesse addimandato di cosa alcuna, la mia risponsione sarebbe stata solamente, "Amore," con viso vestito d' umiltà. E quando ella fosse alquanto propinqua al salutare, uno spirito d' Amore, distruggendo tutti gli altri spiriti sensitivi, pingeva fuori i deboletti spiriti del viso, e dicea loro : "Andate ad onorare la donna vostra ;" ed egli si rimaneva nel loco loro. E chi avesse voluto conoscere Amore, far lo potea mirando lo tremore degli occhi miei. E quando questa gentilissima donna salutava, non che Amore fosse tal mezzo, che potesse obumbrare a me la intollerabile beatitudine, ma egli quasi per soperchio di dolcezza diveniva tale, che lo mio corpo, lo quale era tutto sotto il suo reggimento, molte volte si movea come cosa grave inanimata. Sicchè appare manifestamente che nella sua salute abitava la mia beatitudine, la quale molte volte passava e redundava la mia capacitate.

To the which end I say that when she appeared in any place, it seemed to me, by the hope of her excellent salutation, that there was no man mine enemy any longer ; and such warmth of charity came upon me that most certainly in that moment I would have pardoned whosoever had done me an injury ; and if one should then have questioned me concerning any matter, I could only have said unto him " Love," with a countenance clothed in humbleness. And what time she made ready to salute me, the spirit of Love, destroying all other perceptions, thrust forth the feeble spirits of mine eyes, saying, " Do homage unto your mistress," and putting itself in their place to obey : so that he who would, might then have beheld Love, beholding the lids of mine eyes shake. And when this most gentle lady gave her salutation, Love, so far from being a medium beclouding mine intolerable beatitude, then bred in me such an overpowering sweetness that my body, being all subjected thereto, remained many times helpless and passive. Whereby it is made manifest that in her salutation alone was there any beatitude for me, which then very often went beyond my endurance.



Ora, tornando al proposito, dico che, poi che la mia beatitudine mi fu negata, mi giunse tanto dolore, che partitomi dalle genti, in solinga parte andai a bagnare la terra d' amarissime lagrime : e poi che alquanto mi fu sollevato questo lagrimare, misimi nella mia camera là ove potea lamentarmi senza essere udito. E quivi chiamando misericordia alla donna della cortesia, e dicendo : “ Amore, aiuta il tuo fedele ” m' addormentai come un pargoletto battuto lagrimando. Avvenne quasi nel mezzo del mio dormire, che mi pareva vedere nella mia camera lungo me sedere un giovane vestito di bianchissime vestimenta, e pensando molto, quanto alla vista sua, mi riguardava là ov' io giacea ; e quando m' avea guardato alquanto, pareami che sospirando mi chiamasse, e dicessemi queste parole : “ *Fili mi, tempus est ut prætermittantur simulata nostra.* ” Allora mi pareva ch' io 'l conoscessi, però che mi chiamava così, come assai fiate nelli miei sonni m' avea già chiamato. E riguardandolo mi pareva che piangesse pietosamente, e pareva che attendesse da me alcuna parola : ond' io assicurandomi, cominciai a parlare così con esso : “ Signore della nobiltade, perchè piangi tu ? ” E quegli mi dicea queste parole : “ *Ego tamquam centrum circuli, cui simili modo se habent circumferentiæ partes ; tu*

And now, resuming my discourse, I will go on to relate that when, for the first time, this beatitude was denied me, I became possessed with such grief that parting myself from others, I went into a lonely place to bathe the ground with most bitter tears : and when, by this heat of weeping, I was somewhat relieved, I betook myself to my chamber, where I could lament unheard. And there, having prayed to the Lady of all Mercies, and having said also, "O Love, aid thou thy servant," I went suddenly asleep like a beaten sobbing child. And in my sleep, towards the middle of it, I seemed to see in the room, seated at my side, a youth in very white raiment, who kept his eyes fixed on me in deep thought. And when he had gazed some time, I thought that he sighed and called to me in these words : "My son, it is time for us to lay aside our counterfeiting." And thereupon I seemed to know him ; for the voice was the same wherewith he had spoken at other times in my sleep. Then looking at him, I perceived that he was weeping piteously, and that he seemed to be waiting for me to speak. Wherefore, taking heart, I began thus : "Why weepest thou, Master of all honour ?" And he made answer to me : "I am as the centre of a circle, to the which all parts of the circumference bear an equal

autem non sic.” Allora pensando alle sue parole, mi pareva che mi avesse parlato molto oscuro, sì che io mi sforzava di parlare, e diceagli queste parole: “Ch’ è ciò, signore, che tu mi parli con tanta scuritate?” E quegli mi dicea in parole volgari: “Non dimandar più che utile ti sia.” E però cominciai con lui a ragionare della salute, la quale mi fu negata; e domandailo della cagione; onde in questa guisa da lui mi fu risposto: “Quella nostra Beatrice udio da certe persone, di te ragionando, che la donna, la quale io ti nominai nel camino de’ sospiri, ricevea da te alcuna noia. E però questa gentilissima, la quale è contraria di tutte le noie, non degnò salutare la tua persona, temendo non fosse noiosa. Onde conciossiacosa che veracemente sia conosciuto per lei alquanto lo tuo segreto per lunga consuetudine, voglio che tu dichi certe parole per rima, nelle quali tu comprendi la forza ch’ io tegno sovra te per lei, e come tu fosti suo tostamente dalla tua puerizia. E di ciò chiama testimonio colui che ’l sa; e come tu preghi lui che gliele dica: ed io, che sono quello, volentieri le ne ragionerò; e per questo sentirà

relation ; but with thee it is not thus." And thinking upon his words, they seemed to me obscure ; so that again compelling myself unto speech, I asked of him : " What thing is this, Master, that thou hast spoken thus darkly ? " To the which he made answer in the vulgar tongue : " Demand no more than may be useful to thee." Whereupon I began to discourse with him concerning her salutation which she had denied me ; and when I had questioned him of the cause, he said these words : " Our Beatrice hath heard from certain persons, that the lady whom I named to thee while thou journeyedst full of sighs, is sorely disquieted by thy solicitations : and therefore this most gracious creature, who is the enemy of all disquiet, being fearful of such disquiet, refused to salute thee. For the which reason (albeit, in very sooth, thy secret must needs have become known to her by familiar observation) it is my will that thou compose certain things in rhyme, in the which thou shalt set forth how strong a mastership I have obtained over thee, through her ; and how thou wast hers even from thy childhood. Also do thou call upon him that knoweth these things to bear witness to them, bidding him to speak with her thereof ; the which I, who am he, will do willingly. And thus she shall be made to

ella la tua volontade, la quale sentendo, conoscerà le parole degl' ingannati. Queste parole fa che sieno quasi uno mezzo, sì che tu non parli a lei immediatamente, chè non è degno. E non le mandare in parte alcuna senza me, ove potessero essere intese da lei, ma falle adornare di soave armonia, nella quale io sarò tutte le volte che farà mestieri." E dette queste parole, disparve, e lo mio sonno fu rotto. Ond' io ricordandomi, trovai che questa visione m' era apparita nella nona ora del dì; e anzi che io uscissi di questa camera, proposi di fare una ballata, nella quale seguitassi ciò che 'l mio signore m' avea imposto, e feci questa ballata :

Ballata, io vo' che tu ritruovi Amore,
E con lui vadi a madonna davanti,
Sì che la scusa mia, la qual tu canti,
Ragioni poi con lei lo mio signore.

Tu vai, ballata, sì cortesemente,
Che senza compagnia
Dovresti avere in tutte parti ardire :
Ma, se tu vuogli andar sicuramente,
Ritrova l' Amor pria ;

know thy desire ; knowing which, she shall know likewise that they were deceived who spake of thee to her. And so write these things, that they shall seem rather to be spoken by a third person ; and not directly by thee to her, which is scarce fitting. After the which, send them, not without me, where she may have a chance to hear them ; but have them fitted with a pleasant music, into the which I will pass whensoever it needeth." With this speech he was away, and my sleep was broken up. Whereupon, remembering me, I knew that I had beheld this vision during the ninth hour of the day ; and I resolved that I would make a ditty, before I left my chamber, according to the words my master had spoken. And this is the ditty that I made :

Song, 'tis my will that thou do seek out Love,
And go with him where my dear lady is ;
That so my cause, the which thy harmonies
Do plead, his better speech may clearly prove.

Thou goest, my Song, in such a courteous kind,
That even companionless
Thou may'st rely on thyself anywhere.
And yet, an thou wouldst get thee a safe mind,
First unto Love address

Chè orse non è buon senza lui gire :
Però che quella, che ti debbe udire,
Se, com' io credo, è invêr di me adirata,
E tu di lui non fussi accompagnata,
Leggeramente ti faria disnore.

Con dolce suono, quando se' con lui,
Comincia este parole
Appresso ch' averai chiesta pietate :
“Madonna, quegli, che mi manda a vui,
Quando vi piaccia, vuole,
Sed egli ha scusa, che la m' intendiate.
Amore è quei, che per vostra beltate
Lo face, come vuol, vista cangiare :
Dunque, perchè gli fece altra guardare,
Pensatel voi, da ch' e' non mutò 'l core.”

Dille : “Madonna, lo suo cuore è stato
Con sì fermata fede,
Ch' a voi servir lo pronta ogni pensiero :
Tosto fu vostro, e mai non s' è smagato.”
Sed ella non tel crede,
Di', che 'n domandi Amore, che sa lo vero.
Ed alla fine falle umil preghiero,
Lo perdonare se le fosse a noia,

Thy steps ; whose aid, mayhap, 'twere ill to spare :
Seeing that she to whom thou mak'st thy prayer
Is, as I think, ill-minded unto me,
And that if Love do not companion thee,
Thou'lt have perchance small cheer to tell me of.

With a sweet accent, when thou com'st to her
Begin thou in these words,
First having craved a gracious audience :
“ He who hath sent me as his messenger,
Lady, thus much records,
An thou but suffer him, in his defence.
Love, who comes with me, by thine influence
Can make this man do as it liketh him :
Wherefore, if this fault *is* or doth but *seem*
Do thou conceive : for his heart cannot move.”

Say to her also : “ Lady, his poor heart
Is so confirm'd in faith
That all its thoughts are but of serving thee :
’Twas early thine, and could not swerve apart.”
Then, if she wavereth,
Bid her ask Love, who knows if these things be.
And in the end, beg of her modestly
To pardon so much boldness : saying too :—

Che mi comandi per messo ch' i' moia ;
E vedrassi ubbidire al servitore.

E di' a colui ch' è d' ogni pietà chiave,
Avanti che sdonnei,
Che le sappia contar mia ragion buona :
“ Per grazia della mia nota soave
Riman tu qui con lei,
E del tuo servo, ciò che vuoi, ragiona ;
E s' ella per tuo prego gli perdona,
Fa' che gli annunzi in bel sembiante pace.”
Gentil ballata mia, quando ti piace,
Muovi in quel punto, che tu n' aggi onore.

Questa ballata in tre parti si divide : nella prima dico a lei ov' ella vada, e confortola però che vada più sicura ; e dico nella cui compagnia si metta, se vuole securamente andare, e senza pericolo alcuno ; nella seconda dico quello, che a lei s' appartiene di fare intendere ; nella terza la licenzio del gire quando vuole, raccomandando lo suo movimento nelle braccia della fortuna. La seconda parte comincia quivi : “ Con dolce suono ; ” la terza quivi : “ Gentil ballata.” Potrebbe già l' uomo opporre contro a me e dire, che non sapesse a cui fosse il mio parlare in seconda persona, però che la ballata non è altro, che queste parole ch' io parlo : e però dico che questo

“If thou declare his death to be thy due,
The thing shall come to pass, as doth behove.”

Then pray thou of the Master of all ruth,
Before thou leave her there,
That he befriend my cause and plead it well.
“In guerdon of my sweet rhymes and my truth
(Entreat him) “stay with her ;
Let not the hope of thy poor servant fail ;
And if with her thy pleading should prevail,
Let her look on him and give peace to him.”
Gentle my Song, if good to thee it seem,
Do this : so worship shall be thine and love.

This ditty is divided into three parts. In the first, I tell it whither to go, and I encourage it, that it may go the more confidently, and I tell it whose company to join if it would go with confidence and without any danger. In the second, I say that which it behoves the ditty to set forth. In the third, I give it leave to start when it pleases, recommending its course to the arms of Fortune. The second part begins here, “With a sweet accent ;” the third here, “Gentle my Song.” Some might contradict me, and say that they understand not whom I address in the second person, seeing that the ditty is merely the very words I am speaking. And therefore I say that this

dubbio io lo intendo solvere e dichiarare in questo libello ancora in parte più dubbiosa : ed allora intenda chi qui dubbia, o chi qui volesse opporre, in quello modo.



Appresso questa soprascritta visione, avendo già dette le parole, che Amore m' avea imposto di dire, m' incominciarono molti e diversi pensamenti a combattere e a tentare, ciascuno quasi indefensibilmente : tra' quali pensamenti quattro m' ingombravano più il riposo della vita. L' uno dei quali era questo : “Buona è la signoria d' Amore, però che trae lo intendimento del suo fedele da tutte le vili cose.” L' altro era questo : “Non buona è la signoria d' Amore, però che quanto lo suo fedele più fede gli porta, tanto più gravi e dolorosi punti gli conviene passare.” L' altro era questo : “Lo nome d' Amore è sì dolce a udire, che impossibile mi pare, che la sua operazione sia nelle più cose altro che dolce, conciossiacosia che i nomi seguitino le nominate cose, siccome è scritto : *Nomina sunt consequentia rerum.*” Lo quarto era questo : “La donna per cui Amore ti stringe così, non è come le altre

doubt I intend to solve and clear up in this little book itself, at a more difficult passage, and then let him understand who now doubts, or would now contradict as aforesaid.



After this vision I have recorded, and having written those words which Love had dictated to me, I began to be harassed with many and divers thoughts, by each of which I was sorely tempted ; and in especial, there were four among them that left me no rest. The first was this : “Certainly the lordship of Love is good ; seeing that it diverts the mind from all mean things.” The second was this : “Certainly the lordship of Love is evil ; seeing that the more homage his servants pay to him, the more grievous and painful are the torments wherewith he torments them.” The third was this : “The name of Love is so sweet in the hearing that it would not seem possible for its effects to be other than sweet ; seeing that the name must needs be like unto the thing named : as it is written : ‘Names are the consequents of things.’” And the fourth was this : “The lady whom Love hath chosen out to govern thee is not as other

donne, che leggermente si mova del suo core.” E ciascuno mi combattea tanto, che mi facea stare come colui, che non sa per qual via pigli il suo cammino, e che vuole andare, e non sa onde si vada. E se io pensava di voler cercare una comune via di costoro, cioè là ove tutti si accordassero, questa via era molto inimica verso di me, cioè di chiamare e mettermi nelle braccia della Pietà. Ed in questo stato dimorando, mi giunse volontà di scriverne parole rimate ; e dissine allora questo sonetto :

Tutti li miei pensier parlan d' amore,
Ed hanno in lor sì gran varietà,
Ch' altro mi fa voler sua potestate,
Altro folle ragiona il suo valore.
Altro sperando m' apporta dolzore ;
Altro pianger mi fa spesse fiate ;
E sol s' accordano in chieder pietate,
Tremando di paura ch' è nel core.
Ond' ic non so da qual materia prenda ;
E vorrei dire, e non so ch' io mi dica :
Così mi trovo in amorosa erranza.
E se con tutti vo' fare accordanza,
Convenemi chiamar la mia nemica,
Madonna la Pietà, che mi difenda.

ladies, whose hearts are easily moved." And by each one of these thoughts I was so sorely assailed that I was like unto him who doubteth which path to take, and wishing to go, goeth not. And if I bethought myself to seek out some point at the which all these paths might be found to meet, I discerned but one way, and that irked me ; to wit, to call upon Pity, and to commend myself unto her. And it was then that, feeling a desire to write somewhat thereof in rhyme, I wrote this sonnet :

All my thoughts always speak to me of Love,
Yet have between themselves such difference
That while one bids me bow with mind and sense,
A second saith, "Go to : look thou above ;"
The third one, hoping, yields me joy enough ;
And with the last come tears, I scarce know whence :
All of them craving pity in sore suspense,
Trembling with fears that the heart knoweth of.
And thus, being all unsure which path to take,
Wishing to speak I know not what to say,
And lose myself in amorous wanderings :
Until, (my peace with all of them to make,)
Unto mine enemy I needs must pray,
My lady Pity, for the help she brings.

Questo sonetto in quattro parti si può dividere : nella prima dico e propongo, che tutti i miei pensieri sono d' Amore ; nella seconda dico che sono diversi, e narro la loro diversitate ; nella terza dico in che tutti pare che s' accordino ; nella quarta dico che, volendo dire d' Amore, non so da quale pigli materia ; e se la voglio pigliare da tutti, conviene che io chiami la mia nemica, madonna la Pietà. Dico "madonna," quasi per isdegnoso modo di parlare. La seconda comincia quivi : "Ed hanno in lor ;" la terza : "E sol s' accordan ;" la quarta : "Ond' io."



Appresso la battaglia delli diversi pensieri, avvenne che questa gentilissima venne in parte, ove molte donne gentili erano adunate ; alla qual parte io fui condotto per amica persona, credendosi fare a me gran piacere in quanto mi menava là ove tante donne mostravano le loro bellezze. Ond' io, quasi non sapendo a che fossi menato, e fidandomi nella persona, la quale un suo amico all' estremità della vita condotto avea, dissi : "Perchè semo noi venuti a queste donne ?" Allora quegli mi disse : "Per fare sì ch' elle

This sonnet may be divided into four parts. In the first, I say and propound that all my thoughts are concerning Love. In the second, I say that they are diverse, and I relate their diversity. In the third, I say wherein they all seem to agree. In the fourth, I say that, wishing to speak of Love, I know not from which of these thoughts to take my argument ; and that if I would take it from all, I shall have to call upon mine enemy, my lady Pity. " Lady " I say as in a scornful mode of speech. The second begins here, " Yet have between themselves ; " the third, " All of them craving ; " the fourth, " And thus."



After this battling with many thoughts, it chanced on a day that my most gracious lady was with a gathering of ladies in a certain place ; to the which I was conducted by a friend of mine ; he thinking to do me a great pleasure by showing me the beauty of so many women. Then I, hardly knowing whereunto he conducted me, but trusting in him (who yet was leading his friend to the last verge of life), made question : " To what end are we come among these ladies ? " and he answered : " To the end that they

sieno degnamente servite.” E lo vero è, che adunate quivi erano alla compagnia d’ una gentildonna, che disposta era lo giorno ; e però, secondo l’ usanza della sopradetta cittade, conveniva che le facessero compagnia nel primo sedere alla mensa che facea nella magione del suo novello sposo. Sì che io, credendomi far il piacere di questo amico, proposi di stare al servizio delle donne nella sua compagnia. E nel fine del mio proponimento mi parve sentire un mirabile tremore incominciare nel mio petto dalla sinistra parte, e distendersi di subito per tutte le parti del mio corpo. Allora dico che poggiai la mia persona simulatamente ad una pintura, la quale circondava questa magione ; e temendo non altri si fosse accorto del mio tremare, levai gli occhi, e mirando le donne, vidi tra loro la gentilissima Beatrice. Allora furono sì distrutti li miei spiriti per la forza che Amore prese veggendosi in tanta propinquitade alla gentilissima donna, che non mi rimase in vita più che gli spiriti del viso ; ed ancor questi rimasero fuori de’ loro strumenti, però che Amore volea stare nel loro nobilissimo luogo per vedere la mirabile donna. E avvegna ch’ io fossi altro che prima, molto mi dolea di questi spiritelli, che si lamentavano forte, e diceano : “ Se questi non ci

may be worthily served." And they were assembled around a gentlewoman who was given in marriage on that day ; the custom of the city being that these should bear her company when she sat down for the first time at table in the house of her husband. Therefore I, as was my friend's pleasure, resolved to stay with him and do honour to those ladies. But as soon as I had thus resolved, I began to feel a faintness and a throbbing at my left side, which soon took possession of my whole body. Whereupon I remember that I covertly leaned my back unto a painting that ran round the walls of that house ; and being fearful lest my trembling should be discerned of them, I lifted mine eyes to look on those ladies, and then first perceived among them the excellent Beatrice. And when I perceived her, all my senses were overpowered by the great lordship that Love obtained, finding himself so near unto that most gracious being, until nothing but the spirits of sight remained to me ; and even these remained driven out of their own instruments because Love entered into that honoured place of theirs, that so he might the better behold her. And although I was other than at first, I grieved for the spirits so expelled which kept up a sore lament, saying : " If he had not in this wise

sfolgorasse così fuori del nostro luogo, noi potremmo stare a vedere la meraviglia di questa donna, così come stanno gli altri nostri pari.” Io dico che molte di queste donne, accorgendosi della mia trasfigurazione, si cominciaro a maravigliare ; e ragionando si gabbavano di me con questa gentilissima : onde, lo ingannato amico mi prese per la mano, e traendomi fuori della veduta di queste donne, mi domandò che io avessi. Allora riposato alquanto, e risurti li morti spiriti miei, e li discacciati rivenuti alle loro possessioni, dissi a questo mio amico queste parole : “Io ho tenuti i piedi in quella parte della vita, di là dalla quale non si può ire più per intendimento di ritornare.” E partitomi da lui, mi ritornai nella camera delle lagrime, nella quale, piangendo e vergognandomi, fra me stesso dicea : “Se questa donna sapesse la mia condizione, io non credo che così gabbasse la mia persona, anzi credo che molta pietà ne le verrebbe.” E in questo pianto stando, proposi di dir parole, nelle quali, a lei parlando, significassi la cagione del mio trasfiguramento, e dicessi che io so bene ch’ ella non è saputa, e che se fosse saputa, io credo che pietà ne giungerebbe altrui : e proposi di dirle, desiderando che venissero per avventura nella sua audienza ; e allora dissi questo sonetto :

thrust us forth, we also should behold the marvel of this lady." By this, many of her friends, having discerned my confusion, began to wonder ; and together with herself, kept whispering of me and mocking me. Whereupon my friend, who knew not what to conceive, took me by the hands, and drawing me forth from among them, required to know what ailed me. Then, having first held me at quiet for a space until my perceptions were come back to me, I made answer to my friend : "Of a surety I have now set my feet on that point of life, beyond the which he must not pass who would return." Afterwards, leaving him, I went back to the room where I had wept before ; and again weeping and ashamed, said : "If this lady but knew of my condition, I do not think that she would thus mock at me ; nay, I am sure that she must needs feel some pity." And in my weeping I bethought me to write certain words in the which, speaking to her, I should signify the occasion of my disfigurement, telling her also how I knew that she had no knowledge thereof : which, if it were known, I was certain must move others to pity. And then, because I hoped that peradventure it might come into her hearing, I wrote this sonnet :

Coll' altre donne mia vista gabbate,
 E non pensate, donna, onde si mova,
 Ch' io vi rassembri sì figura nova,
 Quando riguardo la vostra beltate.
 Se lo saveste, non potria pietate
 Tener più contra me l' usata prova ;
 Ch' Amor, quando sì presso a voi mi trova,
 Prende baldanza e tanta sicurtate,
 Che fiere tra' miei spirti paurosi,
 E quale ancide, e qual caccia di fuora,
 Sì ch' ei solo rimane a veder vui :
 Ond' io mi cangio in figura d' altrui,
 Ma non sì, ch' io non senta bene allora
 Gli guai degli scacciati tormentosi.

Questo sonetto non divido in parti, perchè la divisione non si fa, se non per aprire la sentenza della cosa divisa : onde, conciossiacosia che per la ragionata cagione assai sia manifesto, non ha mestieri di divisione. Vero è che tra le parole, ove si manifesta la cagione di questo sonetto, si trovano dubbiose parole ; cioè quando dico, ch' Amore uccide tutti i miei spirti, e li visivi rimangono in vita, salvo che fuori degli strumenti loro. E questo dubbio è impossibile a risolvere a chi non fosse in simil grado fedele d' Amore ; ed a coloro che vi sono è manifesto ciò che solverebbe

Even as the others mock, thou mockest me ;
Not dreaming, noble lady, whence it is
That I am taken with strange semblances,
Seeing thy face which is so fair to see :
For else, compassion would not suffer thee
To grieve my heart with such harsh scoffs as these.
Lo ! Love, when thou art present, sits at ease,
And bears his mastership so mightily,
That all my troubled senses he thrusts out,
Sorely tormenting some, and slaying some,
Till none but he is left and has free range
To gaze on thee. This makes my face to change
Into another's ; while I stand all dumb,
And hear my senses clamour in their rout.

This sonnet I divide not into parts, because a division is only made to open the meaning of the thing divided : and this, as it is sufficiently manifest through the reasons given, has no need of division. True it is that, amid the words whereby is shown the occasion of this sonnet, dubious words are to be found ; namely, when I say that Love kills all my spirits, but that the visual remain in life, only outside of their own instruments. And this difficulty it is impossible for any to solve who is not in equal guise liege unto Love ; and, to those who are so, that is manifest which would clear

*le dubitose parole: e però non è bene a me dichiarare
cotale dubitazione, acciò che lo mio parlare sarebbe indarno,
ovvero di soperchio.*



Appresso la nuova trasfigurazione mi giunse un pensiero forte, il quale poco si partia da me; anzi continuamente mi riprende, ed era di cotale ragionamento meco: “Poscia che tu pervieni a così schernevole vista quando tu se’ presso di questa donna, perchè pur cerchi di vederla? Ecco che se tu fossi domandato da lei, che avresti tu da rispondere? ponendo che tu avessi libera ciascuna tua virtude, in quanto tu le rispondessi.” Ed a questo rispondea un altro umile pensiero, e dicea: “Se io non perdessi le mie virtù, e fossi libero tanto ch’ io potessi rispondere, io le direi, che sì tosto com’ io immagino la sua mirabil bellezza, sì tosto mi giugne un desiderio di vederla, il quale è di tanta virtude, che uccide e distrugge nella mia memoria ciò che contra lui si potesse levare; e però non mi ritraggono le passate passioni

up the dubious words. And therefore it were not well for me to expound this difficulty, inasmuch as my speaking would be either fruitless or else superfluous.



A while after this strange disfigurement, I became possessed with a strong conception which left me but very seldom, and then to return quickly. And it was this : “ Seeing that thou comest into such scorn by the companionship of this lady, wherefore seekest thou to behold her ? If she should ask thee this thing, what answer couldst thou make unto her ? yea, even though thou wert master of all thy faculties, and in no way hindered from answering.” Unto the which, another very humble thought said in reply : “ If I were master of all my faculties, and in no way hindered from answering, I would tell her that no sooner do I image to myself her marvellous beauty than I am possessed with the desire to behold her, the which is of so great strength that it kills and destroys in my memory all those things which might oppose it ; and it is therefore that the great anguish I have endured thereby is yet not enough to restrain

da cercare la veduta di costei.” Ond’ io, mosso da cotali pensamenti, proposi di dire certe parole, nelle quali, scusandomi a lei di cotal riprensione, ponessi anche quello che mi addiviene presso di lei; e dissi questo sonetto:

Ciò che m’ incontra nella mente more
Quando vegno a veder voi, bella gioia,
E quand’ io vi son presso, sento Amore,
Che dice: “Fuggi, se ’l perir t’ è noia.”
Lo viso mostra lo color del core,
Che, tramortendo, ovunque può s’ appoia;
E per l’ ebrietà del gran tremore
Le pietre par che gridin: “Moia, moia.”
Peccato face chi allor mi vide,
Se l’ alma sbigottita non conforta,
Sol dimostrando che di me gli doglia,
Per la pietà, che ’l vostro gabbo uccide,
La qual si cria nella vista smorta
Degli occhi, c’ hanno di lor morte voglia.

Questo sonetto si divide in due parti: nella prima dico la cagione, per che non mi tengo di gire presso a questa donna; nella seconda dico quello che m’ addiviene per andare presso di lei; e comincia questa parte quivi: “E quand’ io vi son presso.” E anche questa seconda parte si divide in cinque,

me from seeking to behold her." And then, because of these thoughts, I resolved to write somewhat, wherein, having pleaded mine excuse, I should tell her of what I felt in her presence. Whereupon I wrote this sonnet :

The thoughts are broken in my memory,
Thou lovely Joy, whene'er I see thy face ;
When thou art near me, Love fills up the space,
Often repeating, " If death irk thee, fly."
My face shows my heart's colour, verily,
Which, fainting, seeks for any leaning-place
Till, in the drunken terror of disgrace,
The very stones seem to be shrieking, " Die !"
It were a grievous sin, if one should not
Strive then to comfort my bewilder'd mind
(Though merely with a simple pitying)
For the great anguish which thy scorn has wrought
In the dead sight o' the eyes grown nearly blind,
Which look for death as for a blessed thing.

This sonnet is divided into two parts. In the first, I tell the cause why I abstain not from coming to this lady. In the second, I tell what befalls me through coming to her ; and this part begins here, " When thou art near." And also this second part divides into five distinct statements.

secondo cinque diverse narrazioni: chè nella prima dico quello che Amore, consigliato dalla Ragione, mi dice quando le son presso; nella seconda manifesto lo stato del core per esempio del viso; nella terza dico, siccome ogni sicurtade mi vien meno; nella quarta dico che pecca quegli che non mostra pietà di me, acciò che mi sarebbe alcun conforto; nell' ultima dico perchè altri dovrebbe aver pietà, cioè per la pietosa vista, che negli occhi mi giunge; la qual vista pietosa è distrutta, cioè non pare altrui, per lo gabbare di questa donna, la quale trae a sua simile operazione coloro, che forse vedrebbero questa pietà. La seconda parte comincia quivi: "Lo viso mostra;" la terza: "E per l' ebrietà;" la quarta: "Peccato face;" la quinta: "Per la pietà."



Appresso ciò che io dissi, questo sonetto mi mosse una volontà di dire anche parole, nelle quali dicessi quattro cose ancora sopra 'l mio stato, le quali non mi pareva che fossero manifestate ancora per me. La prima delle quali si è, che molte volte io mi dolea, quando la mia memoria movesse la fantasia ad immaginare quale Amor mi faceva; la seconda si è, che Amore spesse volte di subito m' assalia sì forte, che in

For, in the first, I say what Love, counselled by Reason, tells me when I am near the lady. In the second, I set forth the state of my heart by the example of the face. In the third, I say how all ground of trust fails me. In the fourth, I say that he sins who shows not pity of me, which would give me some comfort. In the last, I say why people should take pity ; namely, for the piteous look which comes into mine eyes ; which piteous look is destroyed, that is, appeareth not unto others, through the jeering of this lady, who draws to the like action those who peradventure would see this piteousness. The second part begins here, " My face shows ;" the third, " Till, in the drunken terror ;" the fourth, " It were a grievous sin ;" the fifth, " For the great anguish."



Thereafter, this sonnet bred in me desire to write down in verse four other things touching my condition, the which things it seemed to me that I had not yet made manifest. The first among these was the grief that possessed me very often, remembering the strangeness which Love wrought in me ; the second was, how Love many times assailed me so suddenly and with such strength that I had no other

me non rimanea altro di vita se non un pensiero, che parlava della mia donna ; la terza si è, che quando questa battaglia d' Amore mi pugnava così, io mi movea, quasi discolorito tutto, per veder questa donna, credendo che mi difendesse la sua veduta da questa battaglia, dimenticando quello che per appropinquare a tanta gentilezza m' addivenia ; la quarta si è, come cotal veduta non solamente non mi difendea, ma finalmente disconfiggea la mia poca vita ; e però dissi questo sonetto :

Spesse fiate venemi alla mente

L' oscura qualità ch' Amor mi dona ;

E vienmene pietà sì, che sovente

Io dico : “ Ahi lasso ! avvien egli a persona ? ”

Ch' Amor m' assale subitanamente

Sì, che la vita quasi m' abbandona :

Campami un spirto vivo solamente,

E quei riman, perchè di voi ragiona.

Poscia mi sforzo, chè mi voglio aiutare ;

E così smorto, e d' ogni valor vôto,

Vegno a vedervi, credendo guarire :

E se io levo gli occhi per guardare,

Nel cor mi si comincia uno tremoto,

Che fa da' polsi l' anima partire.

life remaining except a thought which spake of my lady ; the third was, how when Love did battle with me in this wise, I would rise up all colourless, if so I might see my lady, conceiving that the sight of her would defend me against the assault of Love, and altogether forgetting that which her presence brought unto me ; and the fourth was, how when I saw her, the sight not only defended me not, but took away the little life that remained to me. And I said these four things in a sonnet, which is this :

At whiles (yea oftentimes) I muse over
The quality of anguish that is mine
Through Love : then pity makes my voice to pine
Saying, "Is any else thus, anywhere?"
Love smiteth me, whose strength is ill to bear ;
So that of all my life is left no sign
Except one thought ; and that, because 'tis thine
Leaves not the body but abideth there.
And then if I, whom other aid forsook,
Would aid myself, and innocent of art
Would fain have sight of thee as a last hope,
No sooner do I lift mine eyes to look
Than the blood seems as shaken from my heart,
And all my pulses beat at once and stop.

Questo sonetto si divide in quattro parti, secondo che quattro cose sono in esso narrate : e però che sono esse ragionate di sopra, non m' intrametto se non di distinguere le parti per li loro cominciamenti : onde dico che la seconda parte comincia quivi : " Ch' Amor ;" la terza quivi : " Poscia mi sforzo ;" la quarta : " E se io levo."



Poi che io dissi questi tre sonetti, ne' quali parlai a questa donna, però che furo narratorii di tutto quasi lo mio stato, credeimi tacere, però che mi pareva avere di me assai manifestato. Avvegna che sempre poi tacessi di dire a lei, a me convenne ripigliare materia nova e più nobile che la passata. E però che la cagione della nova materia è dilettevole a udire, la dirò quanto potrò più brevemente.



Conciossiacosa che per la vista mia molte persone avessero compreso lo segreto del mio cuore, certe donne, le quali adunate s' erano, dilettrandosi

This sonnet is divided into four parts, four things being therein narrated ; and as these are set forth above, I only proceed to distinguish the parts by their beginnings. Wherefore I say that the second part begins, " Love smiteth me ;" the third, " And then if I ;" the fourth, " No sooner do I lift."



After I had written these last three sonnets, wherein I spake unto my lady, telling her almost the whole of my condition, it seemed to me that I should be silent, having said enough concerning myself. But albeit I spake not to her again, yet it behoved me afterward to write of another matter, more noble than the foregoing. And for that the occasion of what I then wrote may be found pleasant in the hearing, I will relate it as briefly as I may.



Through the sore change in mine aspect, the secret of my heart was now understood of many. Which thing being thus, there came a day when certain ladies

l' una nella compagnia dell' altra, sapeano bene lo mio cuore, perchè ciascuna di loro era stata a molte mie sconfitte. Ed io passando presso di loro, sì come dalla fortuna menato, fui chiamato da una di queste gentili donne; e quella, che m' avea chiamato, era donna di molto leggiadro parlare. Sì che quando io fui giunto dinanzi da loro, e vidi bene che la mia gentilissima donna non era tra esse, rassicurandomi le salutai, e domandai che piacesse loro. Le donne erano molte, tra le quali n' avea certe che si rideano tra loro. Altre v' erano, che guardavanmi aspettando che io dovessi dire. Altre v' erano che parlavano tra loro, delle quali una volgendo gli occhi verso me, e chiamandomi per nome, disse queste parole: "A che fine ami tu questa tua donna, poi che tu non puoi la sua presenza sostenere? Dilloci, chè certo il fine di cotale amore conviene che sia novissimo." E poi che m' ebbe dette queste parole, non solamente ella, ma tutte le altre cominciaro ad attendere in vista la mia risponsione. Allora dissi loro queste parole: "Madonne, lo fine del mio amore fu già il saluto di questa donna, di cui voi forse intendete; ed in quello dimorava la beatitudine, ch'è 'l fine di tutti i miei desiderii. Ma poi

to whom it was well known (they having been with me at divers times in my trouble) were met together for the pleasure of gentle company. And as I was going that way by chance, (but I think rather by the will of fortune,) I heard one of them call unto me, and she that called was a lady of very sweet speech. And when I had come close up with them, and perceived that they had not among them mine excellent lady, I was reassured ; and saluted them, asking of their pleasure. The ladies were many ; divers of whom were laughing one to another, while divers gazed at me as though I should speak anon. But when I still spake not, one of them, who before had been talking with another, addressed me by my name, saying, "To what end lovest thou this lady, seeing that thou canst not support her presence ? Now tell us this thing, that we may know it : for certainly the end of such a love must be worthy of knowledge." And when she had spoken these words, not she only, but all they that were with her, began to observe me, waiting for my reply. Whereupon, I said thus unto them : "Ladies, the end and aim of my love was but the salutation of that lady of whom I conceive that ye are speaking ; wherein alone I found that beatitude which is the goal of desire. And now

che le piacque di negarlo a me, lo mio signore Amore, la sua mercede, ha posta tutta la mia beatitudine in quello, che non mi puote venir meno.” Allora queste donne cominciaro a parlare tra loro; e sì come talor vedemo cader l’acqua mischiata di bella neve, così mi pareva vedere le loro parole mischiate di sospiri. E poi che alquanto ebbero parlato tra loro, mi disse anche questa donna, che prima m’ avea parlato, queste parole: “Noi ti preghiamo, che tu ne dica ove sta questa tua beatitudine.” Ed io rispondendole, dissi cotanto: “In quelle parole che lodano la donna mia.” Ed ella rispose: “Se tu ne dicessi vero, quelle parole che tu n’ hai dette notificando la tua condizione, avresti tu operate con altro intendimento.” Ond’ io pensando a queste parole, quasi vergognandomi mi partii da loro; e venia dicendo tra me medesimo: “Poi che è tanta beatitudine in quelle parole che lodano la mia donna, perchè altro parlare è stato il mio?” E però proposi di prendere per materia del mio parlare sempre mai quello che fosse loda di questa gentilissima; e pensando a ciò molto, pareami avere presa troppo alta materia quanto a me, sì che non ardia di cominciare; e così dimorai alquanti

that it hath pleased her to deny me this, Love, my Master, of his great goodness, hath placed all my beatitude there where my hope will not fail me." Then those ladies began to talk closely together ; and as I have seen snow fall among the rain, so was their talk mingled with sighs. But after a little, that lady who had been the first to address me, addressed me again in these words : " We pray thee that thou wilt tell us wherein abideth this thy beatitude." And answering, I said but thus much : " In those words that do praise my lady." To the which she rejoined, " If thy speech were true, those words that thou didst write concerning thy condition would have been written with another intent." Then I, being almost put to shame because of her answer, went out from among them ; and as I walked, I said within myself : " Seeing that there is so much beatitude in those words which do praise my lady, wherefore hath my speech of her been different ?" And then I resolved that thenceforward I would choose for the theme of my writings only the praise of this most gracious being. But when I had thought exceedingly, it seemed to me that I had taken to myself a theme which was much too lofty, so that I dared not begin ; and I remained during several

di con desiderio di dire e con paura di cominciare.



Avvenne poi che, passando per un cammino, lungo il quale correva un rio molto chiaro d' onde, giunse a me tanta volontà di dire, che cominciai a pensare il modo ch' io tenessi; e pensai che parlare di lei non si conveniva, se non che io parlassi a donne in seconda persona; e non ad ogni donna, ma solamente a coloro, che sono gentili, e non sono pur femmine. Allora dico che la mia lingua parlò quasi come per sè stessa mossa, e disse: "Donne, ch' avete intelletto d' amore." Queste parole io riposi nella mente con grande letizia, pensando di prenderle per mio cominciamento: onde poi ritornato alla sopraddeffa cittade, e pensando alquanti dì, cominciai una canzone con questo cominciamento, ordinata nel modo che si vedrà di sotto nella sua divisione. La canzone comincia così:

days in the desire of speaking, and the fear of beginning.



After which it happened, as I passed one day along a path which lay beside a stream of very clear water, that there came upon me a great desire to say somewhat in rhyme ; but when I began thinking how I should say it, methought that to speak of her were unseemly, unless I spoke to other ladies in the second person ; which is to say, not to *any* other ladies, but only to such as are so called because they are gentle, let alone for mere womanhood. Whereupon I declare that my tongue spake as though by its own impulse, and said, “Ladies that have intelligence in love.” These words I laid up in my mind with great gladness, conceiving to take them as my commencement. Wherefore, having returned to the city I spake of, and considered thereof during certain days, I began a poem with this beginning, constructed in the mode which will be seen below in its division. The poem begins here :

Donne, ch' avete intelletto d' amore,
Io vo' con voi della mia donna dire ;
Non perch' io creda sue laude finire,
Ma ragionar per isfogar la mente.
Io dico che, pensando il suo valore,
Amor sì dolce mi si fa sentire,
Che, s' io allora non perdessi ardire,
Farei, parlando, innamorar la gente.
Ed io non vo' parlar sì altamente,
Che divenissi per temenza vile ;
Ma tratterò del suo stato gentile
A rispetto di lei leggermente,
Donne e donzelle amorose, con vui,
Chè non è cosa da parlarne altrui.

Angelo chiama in divino intelletto,
E dice : “ Sire, nel mondo si vede
Meraviglia nell' atto, che procede
Da un' anima, che fin quassù risplende.
Lo cielo, che non have altro difetto
Che d' aver lei, al suo Signor la chiede,
E ciascun santo ne grida mercede.”
Sola Pietà nostra parte difende ;
Chè parla Iddio, che di madonna intende :

Ladies that have intelligence in love,

Of mine own lady I would speak with you ;
Not that I hope to count her praises through,
But telling what I may, to ease my mind.
And I declare that when I speak thereof
Love sheds such perfect sweetness over me
That if my courage fail'd not, certainly
To him my listeners must be all resign'd.
Wherefore I will not speak in such large kind
That mine own speech should foil me, which were base ;
But only will discourse of her high grace
In these poor words, the best that I can find,
With you alone, dear dames and damozels :
'Twere ill to speak thereof with any else.

An Angel, of his blessed knowledge, saith
To God : "Lord, in the world that Thou hast made,
A miracle in action is display'd
By reason of a soul whose splendors fare
Even hither : and since Heaven requireth
Nought saving her, for her it prayeth Thee,
Thy Saints crying aloud continually."
Yet Pity still defends our earthly share
In that sweet soul ; God answering thus the prayer :

“Diletti miei, or sofferite in pace,
Che vostra speme sia quanto mi piace
Là, ov' è alcun che perder lei s' attende.
E che dirà nell' Inferno a' malnati :
'Io vidi la speranza de' beati.'”

Madonna è desiata in l' alto cielo :
Or vo' di sua virtù farvi sapere.
Dico : Qual vuol gentil donna parere
Vada con lei ; chè quando va per via,
Gitta ne' cor villani Amore un gelo,
Per che ogni lor pensiero agghiaccia e père.
E qual soffrisse di starla a vedere
Diverria nobil cosa, o si morría :
E quando trova alcun che degno sia
Di veder lei, quei prova sua virtute ;
Chè gli vien ciò che gli dona salute,
E sì l' umilia, che ogni offesa oblia.
Ancor le ha Dio per maggior grazia dato,
Che non può mal finir chi le ha parlato.

Dice di lei Amor : “Cosa mortale
Come esser può sì adorna e sì pura ?”
Poi la riguarda, e fra sè stesso giura .

“My well-belovèd, suffer that in peace
Your hope remain, while so My pleasure is,
There where one dwells who dreads the loss of her ;
And who in Hell unto the doom’d shall say,
‘I have look’d on that for which God’s chosen pray.’”

My lady is desired in the high Heaven :

Wherefore, it now behoveth me to tell,
Saying : Let any maid that would be well
Esteem’d keep with her : for as she goes by,
Into foul hearts a deathly chill is driven
By Love, that makes ill thought to perish there ;
While any who endures to gaze on her
Must either be made noble, or else die.
When one deserving to be raised so high
Is found, ’tis then her power attains its proof,
Making his heart strong for his soul’s behoof
With the full strength of meek humility.
Also this virtue owns she, by God’s will :
Who speaks with her can never come to ill.

Love saith concerning her : “How chanceth it
That flesh, which is of dust, should be thus pure ?”
Then, gazing always, he makes oath : “Forsure,

Che Dio ne intende di far cosa nova.
Color di perla quasi informa, quale
Convien a donna aver, non fuor misura :
Ella è quanto di ben può far natura ;
Per esempio di lei beltà si prova.
Degli occhi suoi, come ch' ella gli muova,
Escono spirti d' amore infiammati,
Che fieron gli occhi a qual, che allor gli guati,
E passan sì che 'l cor ciascun ritrova.
Voi le vedete Amor pinto nel riso,
Ove non puote alcun mirarla fiso.

Canzone, io so che tu girai parlando
A donne assai, quando t' avrò avanzata :
Or t' ammonisco, perch' io t' ho allevata
Per figliuola d' Amor giovane e piana,
Che dove giugni, tu dichì pregando :
“ Insegnatemi gir ; ch' io son mandata
A quella, di cui loda io sono ornata.”
E se non vogli andar, sì come vana,
Non ristare ove sia gente villana :
Ingégnati, se puoi, d' esser palese
Solo con donna o con uomo cortese,

This is a creature of God till now unknown."
She hath that paleness of the pearl that's fit
In a fair woman, so much and not more ;
She is as high as Nature's skill can soar ;
Beauty is tried by her comparison.
Whatever her sweet eyes are turn'd upon,
Spirits of love do issue thence in flame,
Which through their eyes who then may look on
 them
Pierce to the heart's deep chamber every one.
And in her smile Love's image you may see ;
Whence none can gaze upon her steadfastly.

Dear Song, I know thou wilt hold gentle speech
With many ladies, when I send thee forth :
Wherefore, (being mindful that thou hadst thy birth
From Love, and art a modest, simple child,)
Whomso thou meetest, say thou this to each :
" Give me good speed ! To her I wend along
In whose much strength my weakness is made
 strong."

And if, i' the end, thou wouldst not be beguiled
Of all thy labour, seek not the defiled
And common sort ; but rather choose to be
Where man and woman dwell in courtesy.

Che ti merranno per la via tostana.
Tu troverai Amor con esso lei ;
Raccomandami a lor come tu dèi.

Questa canzone, acciò che sia meglio intesa, la dividerò più artificiosamente che le altre cose di sopra, e però ne fo tre parti. La prima parte è proemio delle seguenti parole; la seconda è lo intento trattato; la terza è quasi una servigiale delle precedenti parole. La seconda comincia quivi: "Angelo chiama;" la terza quivi: "Canzone, io so." La prima parte si divide in quattro: nella prima dico a cui dir voglio della mia donna, e perchè io voglio dire; nella seconda dico quale mi pare a me stesso quand' io penso lo suo valore, e come io direi se non perdessi l'ardimento; nella terza dico come credo dire, acciò che io non sia impedito da viltà; nella quarta, ridi- cendo ancora a cui intendo di dire, dico la ragione per che dico a loro. La seconda comincia quivi: "Io dico;" la terza quivi: "Ed io non vo' par- lar;" la quarta quivi: "Donne e donzelle." Poi quando dico "Angelo chiama," comincio a trattare di questa donna; e dividesi questa parte in due. Nella prima dico, che di lei si comprende in cielo; nella seconda dico, che di lei si comprende in terra,

So to the road thou shalt be reconciled,
And find the lady, and with the lady, Love.
Commend thou me to each, as doth behove.

This poem, that it may be better understood, I will divide more subtly than the others preceding; and therefore I will make three parts of it. The first part is a proem to the words following. The second is the matter treated of. The third is, as it were, a handmaid to the preceding words. The second begins here, "An angel;" the third here, "Dear Song, I know." The first part is divided into four. In the first, I say to whom I mean to speak of my lady, and wherefore I will so speak. In the second, I say what she appears to myself to be when I reflect upon her excellence, and what I would utter if I lost not courage. In the third, I say what it is I purpose to speak, so as not to be impeded by faint-heartedness. In the fourth, repeating to whom I purpose speaking, I tell the reason why I speak to them. The second begins here, "And I declare;" the third here, "Wherefore I will not speak;" the fourth here, "With you alone." Then, when I say "An angel," I begin treating of this lady: and this part is divided into two. In the first, I tell what is understood of her in heaven. In the second, I tell what is understood of her on earth:

quivi : “ *Madonna è desiata.*” Questa seconda parte si divide in due ; chè nella prima dico di lei quanto dalla parte della nobiltà della sua anima, narrando alquante delle sue virtù, che dalla sua anima procedono : nella seconda dico di lei quanto dalla parte della nobiltà del suo corpo, narrando alquante delle sue bellezze, quivi : “ *Dice di lei Amor.*” Questa seconda parte si divide in due ; chè nella prima dico d’ alquante bellezze, che sono secondo tutta la persona ; nella seconda dico d’ alquante bellezze, che sono secondo determinata parte della persona, quivi : “ *Degli occhi suoi.*” Questa seconda parte si divide in due ; chè nell’ una dico degli occhi, che sono principio di Amore ; nella seconda dico della bocca, ch’ è fine d’ Amore. Ed acciò che quinci si levi ogni vizioso pensiero, ricordisi chi legge, che di sopra è scritto che il saluto di questa donna, lo quale era operazione della sua bocca, fu fine de’ miei desiderii, mentre che io lo potei ricevere. Poscia quando dico : “ *Canzone, io so,*” aggiungo una stanza quasi come ancella delle altre, nella quale dico quello, che da questa mia canzone desidero. E però che quest’ ultima parte è lieve ad intendere, non mi travaglio di più divisioni. Dico bene, che a più aprire lo intendimento di questa canzone si converrebbe usare più minute divisioni ; ma tuttavia chi non è di tanto ingegno, che per queste che son fatte la possa intendere, a me non dispiace se la mi lascia

here, "My lady is desired." This second part is divided into two; for, in the first, I speak of her as regards the nobleness of her soul, relating some of her virtues proceeding from her soul; in the second, I speak of her as regards the nobleness of her body, narrating some of her beauties: here, "Love saith concerning her." This second part is divided into two; for, in the first, I speak of certain beauties which belong to the whole person; in the second, I speak of certain beauties which belong to a distinct part of the person: here, "Whatever her sweet eyes." This second part is divided into two; for, in the one, I speak of the eyes, which are the beginning of love; in the second, I speak of the mouth, which is the end of love. And, that every vicious thought may be discarded herefrom, let the reader remember that it is above written that the greeting of this lady, which was an act of her mouth, was the goal of my desires, while I could receive it. Then, when I say, "Dear Song, I know," I add a stanza as it were handmaid to the others, wherein I say what I desire from this my poem. And because this last part is easy to understand, I trouble not myself with more divisions. I say, indeed, that the further to open the meaning of this poem, more minute divisions ought to be used; but nevertheless he who is not of wit enough to understand it by these which have been already made is welcome to leave it

stare : chè certo io temo d' avere a troppi comunicato il suo intendimento, pur per queste divisioni che fatte sono, s' egli avvenisse che molti la potessero udire.



Appresso che questa canzone fu alquanto divulgata fra le genti, conciofossecosa che alcuno amico l' udisse, volontà lo mosse a pregarmi ch' io gli dovessi dire che è Amore, avendo forse, per le udite parole, speranza di me oltre che degna. Ond' io pensando che, appresso di cotal trattato, bello era trattare alcuna cosa d' Amore, e pensando che l' amico era da servire, proposi di dire parole, nelle quali trattassi d' Amore ; e dissi allora questo sonetto :

Amore e 'l cor gentil sono una cosa,
Sì com' il saggio in suo dittato pone ;
E così esser l' un senza l' altro osa,
Com' alma razional senza ragione.
Fagli natura, quando è amorosa,
Amor per sire, e 'l cor per sua magione,
Dentro allo qual dormendo si riposa

alone ; for certes I fear I have communicated its sense to too many by these present divisions, if it so happened that many should hear it.



When this song was a little gone abroad, a certain one of my friends, hearing the same, was pleased to question me, that I should tell him what thing love is ; it may be, conceiving from the words thus heard a hope of me beyond my desert. Wherefore I, thinking that after such discourse it were well to say somewhat of the nature of Love, and also in accordance with my friend's desire, proposed to myself to write certain words in the which I should treat of this argument. And the sonnet that I then made is this :

Love and the gentle heart are one same thing,
Even as the wise man in his ditty saith.
Each, of itself, would be such life in death
As rational soul bereft of reasoning.
'Tis Nature makes them when she loves : a king
Love is, whose palace where he sojourneth
Is call'd the Heart ; there draws he quiet breath

Tal volta breve, e tal lunga stagione.
Beltate appare in saggia donna pui,
Che piace agli occhi sì, che dentro al core
Nasce un desio della cosa piacente :
E tanto dura talora in costui,
Che fa svegliar lo spirito d' amore :
E simil face in donna uomo valente.

Questo sonetto si divide in due parti. Nella prima dico di lui in quanto è in potenza; nella seconda dico di lui in quanto di potenza si riduce in atto. La seconda comincia quivi: "Beltate appare." La prima si divide in due: nella prima dico in che soggetto sia questa potenza; nella seconda dico come questo soggetto e questa potenza sieno prodotti insieme, e come l' uno guarda l' altro, come forma materia. La seconda comincia quivi: "Fagli natura." Poi quando dico: "Beltate appare," dico come questa potenza si riduce in atto; e prima come si riduce in uomo, poi come si riduce in donna, quivi: "E simil face in donna."



Poi che trattai d' Amore nella sopradetta rima, venne-

At first, with brief or longer slumbering.
Then beauty seen in virtuous womankind
Will make the eyes desire, and through the heart
Send the desiring of the eyes again ;
Where often it abides so long enshrined
That Love at length out of his sleep will start.
And women feel the same for worthy men.

This sonnet is divided into two parts. In the first, I speak of him according to his power. In the second, I speak of him according as his power translates itself into act. The second part begins here, "Then beauty seen." The first is divided into two. In the first, I say in what subject this power exists. In the second, I say how this subject and this power are produced together, and how the one regards the other, as form does matter. The second begins here, "'Tis Nature." Afterwards when I say, "Then beauty seen in virtuous womankind," I say how this power translates itself into act ; and, first, how it so translates itself in a man, then how it so translates itself in a woman : here, "And women feel."



Having treated of love in the foregoing, it appeared

mi volontà di dire anche in lode di questa gentilissima parole, per le quali io mostrassi come si sveglia per lei quest' amore, e come non solamente lo sveglia là ove dorme, ma là ove non è in potenza, ella mirabilmente operando lo fa venire. E dissi allora questo sonetto :

Negli occhi porta la mia donna Amore ;
Per che si fa gentil ciò ch' ella mira :
Ov' ella passa, ogni uom vêr lei si gira,
E cui saluta fa tremar lo core.
Sì che, bassando il viso, tutto smuore,
E d' ogni suo difetto allor sospira :
Fuggon dinanzi a lei superbia ed ira :
Aiutatemi, donne, a farle onore.
Ogni dolcezza, ogni pensiero umile
Nasce nel core a chi parlar la sente ;
Ond' è beato chi prima la vide.
Quel ch' ella par quand' un poco sorride,
Non si può dicer, nè tener a mente,
Sì è nuovo miracolo gentile.

Questo sonetto ha tre parti. Nella prima dico sì come questa donna riduce in atto questa potenza, secondo la nobilissima parte degli occhi suoi ; e nella terza dico questo medesimo secondo la nobilissima parte della sua bocca. E intra queste

to me that I should also say something in praise of my lady, wherein it might be set forth how love manifested itself when produced by her ; and how not only she could awaken it where it slept, but where it was not she could marvellously create it. To the which end I wrote another sonnet ; and it is this :

My lady carries love within her eyes ;
All that she looks on is made pleasanter ;
Upon her path men turn to gaze at her ;
He whom she greeteth feels his heart to rise,
And droops his troubled visage, full of sighs,
And of his evil heart is then aware :
Hate loves, and pride becomes a worshipper.
O women, help to praise her in somewise.
Humbleness, and the hope that hopeth well,
By speech of hers into the mind are brought,
And who beholds is blessed oftenwhiles.
The look she hath when she a little smiles
Cannot be said, nor holden in the thought ;
'Tis such a new and gracious miracle.

This sonnet has three sections. In the first, I say how this lady brings this power into action by those most noble features, her eyes ; and, in the third, I say this same as to that most noble feature, her mouth. And between these

due parti ha una particella, ch' è quasi domandatrice d' aiuto alla precedente parte ed alla seguente, e comincia quivi : " Aiutatemi, donne." La terza comincia quivi : " Ogni dolcezza." La prima si divide in tre ; chè nella prima dico, come virtuosamente fa gentile ciò ch' ella vede ; e questo è tanto a dire, quanto adducere Amore in potenza là ove non è. Nella seconda dico, come riduce in atto Amore ne' cuori di tutti coloro cui vede. Nella terza dico quello che poi virtuosamente adopera ne' lor cuori. La seconda comincia : " Ov' ella passa ;" la terza : " E cui saluta." Quando poscia dico : " Aiutatemi, donne," do ad intendere a cui la mia intenzione è di parlare, chiamando le donne che m' aiutino ad onorare costei. Poi quando dico : " Ogni dolcezza," dico quel medesimo ch' è detto nella prima parte, secondo due atti della sua bocca ; uno de' quali è il suo dolcissimo parlare, e l' altro lo suo mirabile riso ; salvo che non dico di questo ultimo come adoperi ne' cuori altrui, perchè la memoria non puote ritener lui, nè sue operazioni.



Appresso ciò non molti dì passati (sì come piacque al glorioso Sire, lo quale non negò la morte a sè), colui ch' era stato genitore di tanta meraviglia, quanta

two sections is a little section, which asks, as it were, help for the previous section and the subsequent ; and it begins here, " O women, help." The third begins here, " Humbleness." The first is divided into three ; for, in the first, I say how she with power makes noble that which she looks upon ; and this is as much as to say that she brings Love, in power, thither where he is not. In the second, I say how she brings Love, in act, into the hearts of all those whom she sees. In the third, I tell what she afterwards, with virtue, operates upon their hearts. The second begins, " Upon her path ;" the third, " He whom she greeteth." Then, when I say, " O women, help," I intimate to whom it is my intention to speak, calling on women to help me to honour her. Then, when I say, " Humbleness," I say that same which is said in the first part, regarding two acts of her mouth, one whereof is her most sweet speech, and the other her marvellous smile. Only, I say not of this last how it operates upon the hearts of others, because memory cannot retain this smile, nor its operation.



Not many days after this, (it being the will of the most High God, who also from Himself put not away death,) the father of wonderful Beatrice, going

si vedeva ch'era quella nobilissima Beatrice, di questa vita uscendo se ne gio alla gloria eternale veracemente. Onde, conciossia che cotale partire sia doloroso a coloro che rimangono, e sono stati amici di colui che se ne va ; e nulla sia così intima amistà, come quella da buon padre a buon figliuolo, e da buon figliuolo a buon padre ; e questa donna fosse in altissimo grado di bontade, e lo suo padre (sì come da molti si crede, e vero è) fosse buono in alto grado ; manifesto è, che questa donna fu amarissimamente piena di dolore. E conciossiacosa che, secondo l' usanza della sopradetta cittade, donne con donne, e uomini con uomini si adunino a cotale tristizia, molte donne s' adunaro colà, ove questa Beatrice piangea pietosamente : ond' io veggendo ritornare alquante donne da lei, udii lor dire parole di questa gentilissima com' ella si lamentava. Tra le quali parole udii come dicevano : “ Certo ella piange sì che qual la mirasse dovrebbe morire di pietade.” Allora trapassarono queste donne ; ed io rimasi in tanta tristizia, che alcuna lagrima talor bagnava la mia faccia, ond' io mi ricopia con pormi spesse volte le mani agli occhi. E se non fosse ch'io attendea anche udire di lei (però che io era in luogo onde ne giano la maggior parte delle donne che da lei si partiano), io men sarei nascoso incontanente che le lagrime m' aveano assalito.

out of this life, passed certainly into glory. Thereby it happened, as of very sooth it might not be otherwise, that this lady was made full of the bitterness of grief: seeing that such a parting is very grievous unto those friends who are left, and that no other friendship is like to that between a good parent and a good child; and furthermore considering that this lady was good in the supreme degree, and her father (as by many it hath been truly averred) of exceeding goodness. And because it is the usage of that city that men meet with men in such a grief, and women with women, certain ladies of her companionship gathered themselves unto Beatrice, where she kept alone in her weeping: and as they passed in and out, I could hear them speak concerning her, how she wept. At length two of them went by me, who said: "Certainly she grieveth in such sort that one might die for pity, beholding her." Then, feeling the tears upon my face, I put up my hands to hide them: and had it not been that I hoped to hear more concerning her, (seeing that where I sat, her friends passed continually in and out,) I should assuredly have gone thence to be alone, when I felt the tears come.

E però dimorando ancora nel medesimo luogo, donne anche passaro presso di me, le quali andavano ragionando e dicendo tra loro queste parole : “ Chi dee mai esser lieta di noi, che avemo udito parlare questa donna così pietosamente ? ” Appresso costoro passarono altre, che veniano dicendo : “ Questi che quivi è piange nè più nè meno come se l’ avesse veduta, come noi avemo.” Altre poi diceano di me : “ Vedi questo che non pare desso ; tal è divenuto.” E così passando queste donne, udii parole di lei e di me in questo modo che detto è. Ond’ io poi pensando, proposi di dire parole, acciò che degnamente avea cagione di dire, nelle quali io conchiudessi tutto ciò che udito avea da queste donne. E però che volentieri le avrei domandate, se non mi fosse stata riprensione, presi materia di dire, come se io le avessi domandate, ed elle m’ avessero risposto. E feci due sonetti ; che nel primo domando in quel modo che voglia mi giunse di domandare ; nell’ altro dico la loro risposta, pigliando ciò ch’ io udii da loro, sì come lo m’ avessero detto rispondendo. E cominciai il primo : “ Voi, che portate ; ” il secondo : “ Se’ tu colui.”

Voi, che portate la sembianza umile,
Cogli occhi bassi mostrando dolore,
Onde venite, chè ’l vostro colore

But as I still sat in that place, certain ladies again passed near me, who were saying among themselves : “Which of us shall be joyful any more, who have listened to this lady in her piteous sorrow ?” And there were others who said as they went by me : “He that sitteth here could not weep more if he had beheld her as we have beheld her ;” and again : “He is so altered that he seemeth not as himself.” And still as the ladies passed to and fro, I could hear them speak after this fashion of her and of me. Wherefore afterwards, having considered and perceiving that there was herein matter for poesy, I resolved that I would write certain rhymes in the which should be contained all that those ladies had said. And because I would willingly have spoken to them if it had not been for discreetness, I made in my rhymes as though I had spoken and they had answered me. And therefore I wrote two sonnets ; in the first of which I addressed them as I would fain have done ; and in the second related their answer, using the speech that I had heard from them, as though it had been spoken unto myself. And the sonnets are these :

You that thus wear a modest countenance
With lids weigh'd down by the heart's heaviness,
Whence come you, that among you every face

Par divenuto di pietà simile ?
Vedeste voi nostra donna gentile
Bagnata il viso di pianto d' amore ?
Ditelmi, donne, chè mel dice il core,
Perch' io vi veggio andar senz' atto vile.
E se venite da tanta pietate,
Piacciavi di restar qui meco alquanto,
E che che sia di lei, nol mi celate :
Ch' io veggio gli occhi vostri c' hanno pianto,
E veggiovì venir sì sfigurate,
Che 'l cor mi trema di vederne tanto.

Questo sonetto si divide in due parti. Nella prima chiamo e dimando queste donne se vengono da lei, dicendo loro ch' io il credo, perchè tornano quasi ingentilite. Nella seconda le prego che mi dicano di lei ; e la seconda comincia quivi : “ E se venite.”

Se' tu colui, c' hai trattato sovente
Di nostra donna, sol parlando a nui ?
Tu rassomigli alla voce ben lui,
Ma la figura ne par d' altra gente.
E perchè piangi tu sì coralmente,
Che fai di te pietà venir altrui ?
Vedestù pianger lei, chè tu non puoi
Punto celar la dolorosa mente ?

Appears the same, for its pale troubled glance ?
Have you beheld my lady's face, perchance,
Bow'd with the grief that Love makes full of grace ?
Say now, "This thing is thus ;" as my heart says,
Marking your grave and sorrowful advance.
And if indeed you come from where she sighs
And mourns, may it please you (for his heart's relief)
To tell how it fares with her unto him
Who knows that you have wept, seeing your eyes,
And is so grieved with looking on your grief
That his heart trembles and his sight grows dim.

This sonnet is divided into two parts. In the first, I call and ask these ladies whether they come from her, telling them that I think they do, because they return the nobler. In the second, I pray them to tell me of her : and the second begins here, "And if indeed."

Canst thou indeed be he that still would sing
Of our dear lady unto none but us ?
For though thy voice confirms that it is thus,
Thy visage might another witness bring.
And wherefore is thy grief so sore a thing
That grieving thou mak'st others dolorous ?
Hast thou too seen her weep, that thou from us
Canst not conceal thine inward sorrowing ?

Lascia piangere a noi, e triste andare ;
E' fa peccato chi mai ne conforta,
Chè nel suo pianto l' udimmo parlare.
Ella ha nel viso la pietà sì scorta,
Che qual l' avesse voluta mirare,
Saria dinanzi a lei caduta morta.

Questo sonetto ha quattro parti, secondo che quattro modi di parlare ebbero in loro le donne per cui rispondo. E però che di sopra sono assai manifesti, non mi trametto di narrare la sentenza delle parti, e però le distinguo solamente. La seconda comincia quivi: "E perchè piangi tu;" la terza: "Lascia piangere a noi;" la quarta: "Ella ha nel viso."



Appresso ciò pochi dì, avvenne che in alcuna parte della mia persona mi giunse una dolorosa infermitade, ond'io soffersi per molti dì amarissima pena ; la quale mi condusse a tanta debolezza, che mi convenia stare come coloro, i quali non si possono muovere. Io dico che nel nono giorno sentendomi dolore intollerabile, giunsemi un pensiero, il quale era della mia donna. E quando ebbi

Nay, leave our woe to us : let us alone :

'Twere sin if one should strive to soothe our woe,
For in her weeping we have heard her speak :
Also her look's so full of her heart's moan
That they who should behold her, looking so,
Must fall asworn, feeling all life grow weak.

This sonnet has four parts, as the ladies in whose person I reply had four forms of answer. And, because these are sufficiently shown above, I stay not to explain the purport of the parts, and therefore I only discriminate them. The second begins here, "And wherefore is thy grief;" the third here, "Nay, leave our woe;" the fourth, "Also her look."



A few days after this, my body became afflicted with a painful infirmity, whereby I suffered bitter anguish for many days, which at last brought me unto such weakness that I could no longer move. And I remember that on the ninth day, being overcome with intolerable pain, a thought came into my mind concerning my lady : but when it had a little

pensato alquanto di lei, io ritornai pensando alla mia debilitata vita, e veggendo come leggero era lo suo durare, ancora che sana fosse, cominciai a piangere fra me stesso di tanta miseria. Onde sospirando forte, fra me medesimo dicea: “Di necessità conviene, che la gentilissima Beatrice alcuna volta si muoia.” E però mi giunse uno sì forte smarrimento, ch’ io chiusi gli occhi e cominciai a travagliare come farnetica persona, ed immaginare in questo modo: che nel cominciamento dell’ errare che fece la mia fantasia, apparvero a me certi visi di donne scapigliate, che mi diceano: “Tu pur morrai.” E dopo queste donne, m’ apparvero certi visi diversi ed orribili a vedere, i quali mi diceano: “Tu se’ morto.” Così cominciando ad errare la mia fantasia, venni a quello, che non sapea dove io fossi; e veder mi pareva donne andare scapigliate piangendo per via, maravigliosamente tristi; e pareami vedere il sole oscurare sì, che le stelle si mostravano d’ un colore, che mi faceva giudicare che piangessero: e parevami che gli uccelli volando cadessero morti, e che fossero grandissimi terremoti. E maravigliandomi in cotale fantasia, e paventando assai, imaginai

nourished this thought, my mind returned to its brooding over mine enfeebled body. And then perceiving how frail a thing life is, even though health keep with it, the matter seemed to me so pitiful that I could not choose but weep ; and weeping I said within myself : " Certainly it must some time come to pass that the very gentle Beatrice will die." Then, feeling bewildered, I closed mine eyes ; and my brain began to be in travail as the brain of one frantic, and to have such imaginations as here follow. And at the first, it seemed to me that I saw certain faces of women with their hair loosened, which called out to me, "Thou shalt surely die ;" after the which, other terrible and unknown appearances said unto me, "Thou art dead." At length, as my phantasy held on in its wanderings, I came to be I knew not where, and to behold a throng of dishevelled ladies wonderfully sad, who kept going hither and thither weeping. Then the sun went out, so that the stars showed themselves, and they were of such a colour that I knew they must be weeping : and it seemed to me that the birds fell dead out of the sky, and that there were great earthquakes. With that, while I wondered in my trance, and was filled with a grievous fear, I conceived that

alcuno amico, che mi venisse a dire: “Or non sai? la tua mirabile donna è partita di questo secolo.” Allora incominciai a piangere molto pietosamente; e non solamente piangea nella imaginazione, ma piangea con gli occhi bagnandoli di vere lagrime. Io imaginava di guardare verso il cielo, e pareami vedere moltitudine di angeli, i quali tornassero in suso ed avessero dinanzi loro una nebulletta bianchissima: e pareami che questi angeli cantassero gloriosamente; e le parole del loro canto mi pareva che fossero queste: “*Osanna in excelsis*,” ed altro non mi pareva udire. Allora mi pareva che il cuore, ov’ era tanto amore, mi dicesse: “Vero è che morta giace la nostra donna.” E per questo mi pareva andare per vedere lo corpo, nel quale era stata quella nobilissima e beata anima. E fu sì forte la errante fantasia, che mi mostrò questa donna morta: e pareami che donne le coprissero la testa con un bianco velo: e pareami che la sua faccia avesse tanto aspetto d’ umiltade, che pareva che dicesse: “Io sono a vedere lo principio della pace.” In questa imaginazione mi giunse tanta umiltade per veder lei, che io chiamava la Morte, e dicea: “Dolcissima Morte, vieni a me, e non m’ esser villana; però che tu dêi esser gentile,

a certain friend came unto me and said : “ Hast thou not heard ? She that was thine excellent lady hath been taken out of life. ” Then I began to weep very piteously ; and not only in mine imagination, but with mine eyes, which were wet with tears. And I seemed to look towards Heaven, and to behold a multitude of angels who were returning upwards, having before them an exceedingly white cloud : and these angels were singing together gloriously, and the words of their song were these : “ Hosanna in the highest : ” and there was no more that I heard. Then my heart that was so full of love said unto me : “ It is true that our lady lieth dead : ” and it seemed to me that I went to look upon the body wherein that blessed and most noble spirit had had its abiding - place. And so strong was this idle imagining, that it made me to behold my lady in death ; whose head certain ladies seemed to be covering with a white veil ; and who was so humble of her aspect that it was as though she had said, “ I have attained to look on the beginning of peace. ” And therewithal I came unto such humility by the light of her, that I cried out upon Death, saying : “ Now come unto me, and be not bitter against me any longer : surely, there where thou hast been,

in tal parte se' stata ! or vieni a me che molto ti desidero : tu vedi ch' io porto già lo tuo colore." E quando io avea veduto compiere tutti i dolorosi mestieri, che alle corpora de' morti s' usano di fare, mi pareva tornare nella mia camera, e quivi mi pareva guardare verso il cielo : e sì forte era la mia imaginazione, che, piangendo, cominciai a dire con vera voce : "O anima bellissima, com' è beato colui che ti vede !" E dicendo queste parole con doloroso singulto di pianto, e chiamando la Morte che venisse a me, una donna giovane e gentile, la quale era lungo il mio letto, credendo che il mio piangere e le mie parole fossero lamento per lo dolore della mia infermità, con grande paura cominciò a piangere. Onde altre donne, che per la camera erano, s' accorsero di me che io piangeva per lo pianto che vedeano fare a questa: onde facendo lei partire da me, la quale era meco di propinquissima sanguinità congiunta, elle si trassero verso me per isvegliarmi, credendo che io sognassi, e diceanmi : "Non dormir più, e non ti sconsolare." E parlandomi così, allora cessò la forte fantasia entro quel punto ch' io volea dire : "O Beatrice ! benedetta sii tu." E già detto avea : "O Beatrice !" quando

thou hast learned gentleness. Wherefore come now unto me who do greatly desire thee : seest thou not that I wear thy colour already ?” And when I had seen all those offices performed that are fitting to be done unto the dead, it seemed to me that I went back unto mine own chamber, and looked up towards heaven. And so strong was my phantasy, that I wept again in very truth, and said with my true voice : “ O excellent soul ! how blessed is that that now looketh upon thee ! ” And as I said these words, with a painful anguish of sobbing and another prayer unto Death, a young and gentle lady, who had been standing beside me where I lay, conceiving that I wept and cried out because of the pain of mine infirmity, was taken with trembling and began to shed tears. Whereby other ladies, who were about the room, becoming aware of my discomfort by reason of the moan that she made, (who indeed was of my very near kindred,) led her away from where I was, and then set themselves to awaken me, thinking that I dreamed, and saying : “ Sleep no longer, and be not disquieted.” Then, by their words, this strong imagination was brought suddenly to an end, at the moment that I was about to say, “ O Beatrice ! peace be with thee ! ” And already I had said, “ O Beatrice ! ” when being

riscuotendomi apersi gli occhi, e vidi ch' io era ingannato ; e con tutto ch' io chiamassi questo nome, la mia voce era sì rotta dal singulto del piangere, che queste donne non mi poterono intendere. Ed avvegna che io mi vergognassi molto, tuttavia per alcuno ammonimento d' amore mi rivolsi loro. E quando mi videro, cominciaro a dire : “Questi par morto” ; e a dir fra loro : “Procuriam di confortarlo.” Onde molte parole mi diceano da confortarmi, e talora mi domandavano di che io avessi avuto paura. Ond' io, essendo alquanto riconfortato, e conosciuto lo fallace imaginare, risposi loro : “Io vi dirò quello c' ho avuto.” Allora cominciandomi dal principio, fino alla fine dissi loro ciò che veduto avea, tacendo il nome di questa gentilissima. Onde io poi, sanato di questa infermità, proposi di dir parole di questo che m' era avvenuto, però che mi pareva che fosse amorosa cosa a udire ; e sì ne dissi questa canzone :

Donna pietosa e di novella etate,
Adorna assai di gentilezze umane,
Era là ov' io chiamava spesso Morte.
Veggendo gli occhi mei pien di pietate,

aroused, I opened mine eyes, and knew that it had been a deception. But albeit I had indeed uttered her name, yet my voice was so broken with sobs, that it was not understood by these ladies ; so that in spite of the sore shame that I felt, I turned towards them by Love's counselling. And when they beheld me, they began to say, "He seemeth as one dead," and to whisper among themselves, "Let us strive if we may not comfort him." Whereupon they spake to me many soothing words, and questioned me moreover touching the cause of my fear. Then I, being somewhat reassured, and having perceived that it was a mere phantasy, said unto them, "This thing it was that made me afeard ;" and told them of all that I had seen, from the beginning even unto the end, but without once speaking the name of my lady. Also, after I had recovered from my sickness, I bethought me to write these things in rhyme ; deeming it a lovely thing to be known. Whereof I wrote this poem :

A very pitiful lady, very young,
Exceeding rich in human sympathies,
Stood by, what time I clamour'd upon Death ;
And at the wild words wandering on my tongue

Ed ascoltando le parole vane,
Si mosse con paura a pianger forte ;
Ed altre donne, che sì furo accorte
Di me per quella che meco piangia,
Fecer lei partir via,
Ed appressârsi per farmi sentire.
Qual dicea : “ Non dormire ; ”
E qual dicea : “ Perchè sì ti sconsorte ? ”
Allor lasciai la nova fantasia,
Chiamando il nome della donna mia.

Era la voce mia sì dolorosa,
E rotta sì dall' angoscia e dal pianto,
Ch' io solo intesi il nome nel mio core ;
E con tutta la vista vergognosa,
Ch' era nel viso mio giunta cotanto,
Mi fece verso lor volgere Amore.
Egli era tale a veder mio colore,
Che facea ragionar di morte altrui :
“ Deh confortiam costui, ”
Pregava l' una l' altra umilmente ;
E dicevan sovente :
“ Che vedestù, che tu non hai valore ? ”
E quando un poco confortato fui,
Io dissi : “ Donne, dicerollo a vui.

And at the piteous look within mine eyes
She was affrighted, that sobs choked her breath.
So by her weeping where I lay beneath,
Some other gentle ladies came to know
My state, and made her go :
Afterward, bending themselves over me,
One said, "Awaken thee !"
And one, "What thing thy sleep disquieteth ?"
With that, my soul woke up from its eclipse,
The while my lady's name rose to my lips :

But utter'd in a voice so sob-broken,
So feeble with the agony of tears,
That I alone might hear it in my heart ;
And though that look was on my visage then
Which he who is ashamed so plainly wears,
Love made that I through shame held not apart,
But gazed upon them. And my hue was such
That they look'd at each other and thought of death ;
Saying under their breath
Most tenderly, "Oh, let us comfort him :"
Then unto me : "What dream
Was thine, that it hath shaken thee so much ?"
And when I was a little comforted,
"This, ladies, was the dream I dreamt," I said.

“ Mentre io pensava la mia frale vita,
E vedea 'l suo durar com' è leggiéro,
Piansemi Amor nel core, ove dimora ;
Per che l' anima mia fu sì smarrita,
Che sospirando dicea nel pensiero :
' Ben converrà che la mia donna mora.'
Io presi tanto smarrimento allora,
Ch' io chiusi gli occhi vilmente gravati ;
Ed eran sì smagati
Gli spirti miei, che ciascun giva errando.
E poscia immaginando,
Di conoscenza e di verità fuora,
Visi di donne m' apparver crucciati,
Che mi dicean : ' Morra'ti pur, morra'ti.'

“ Poi vidi cose dubitose molte
Nel vano immaginare, ov' io entrai ;
Ed esser mi pareva non so in qual loco,
E veder donne andar per via disciolte,
Qual lagrimando, e qual traendo guai,
Che di tristizia saettavan foco.
Poi mi parve vedere a poco a poco
Turbar lo sole ed apparir la stella,
E pianger egli ed ella ;

“ I was a-thinking how life fails with us
Suddenly after such a little while ;
When Love sobb'd in my heart, which is his home.
Whereby my spirit wax'd so dolorous
That in myself I said, with sick recoil :
' Yea, to my lady too this Death must come.'
And therewithal such a bewilderment
Possess'd me, that I shut mine eyes for peace ;
And in my brain did cease
Order of thought, and every healthful thing.
Afterwards, wandering
Amid a swarm of doubts that came and went,
Some certain women's faces hurried by,
And shriek'd to me, 'Thou too shalt die, shalt die !'

“ Then saw I many broken hinted sights
In the uncertain state I stepp'd into.
Meseem'd to be I know not in what place,
Where ladies through the street, like mournful
lights,
Ran with loose hair, and eyes that frighten'd you
By their own terror, and a pale amaze :
The while, little by little, as I thought,
The sun ceased, and the stars began to gather,
And each wept at the other ;

Cader gli augelli volando per l' a're,
E la terra tremare ;
Ed uom m' apparve scolorito e fioco,
Dicendomi : ' Che fai ? non sai novella ?
Morta è la donna tua, ch' era sì bella.'

“ Levava gli occhi miei bagnati in pianti,
E vedea (che parean pioggia di manna)
Gli angeli che tornavan suso in cielo ;
Ed una nuvoletta avean davanti,
Dopo la qual cantavan tutti : ' Osanna ;'
E s' altro avesser detto, a voi dire'lo.
Allor diceva Amor : ' Più non ti celo ;
Vieni a veder nostra donna che giace.'
L'immaginar fallace
Mi condusse a veder mia donna morta ;
E quando l' ebbi scorta,
Vedea che donne la covrian d' un velo ;
Ed avea seco umiltà sì verace,
Che pareva che dicesse : ' Io sono in pace.'

“ Io diveniva nel dolor sì umile,
Veggendo in lei tanta umiltà formata,

And birds dropp'd in mid-flight out of the sky
And earth shook suddenly;
And I was 'ware of one, hoarse and tired out,
Who ask'd of me : 'Hast thou not heard it
said ? . . .

Thy lady, she that was so fair, is dead.'

"Then lifting up mine eyes, as the tears came,
I saw the Angels, like a rain of manna,
In a long flight flying back heavenward ;
Having a little cloud in front of them,
After the which they went and said, 'Hosanna !'
And if they had said more, you should have heard.
✱ Then Love spoke thus : 'Now all shall be made
clear :

Come and behold our lady where she lies.' ✱

These idle phantasies

Then carried me to see my lady dead :

And standing at her head

Her ladies put a white veil over her ;

And with her was such very humbleness

That she appeared to say, 'I am at peace.'

"And I became so humble in my grief,
Seeing in her such deep humility,

Ch' io dicea : 'Morte, assai dolce ti tegno ;
Tu dêi omai esser cosa gentile,
Poi che tu se' nella mia donna stata,
E dêi aver pietate, e non disdegno.
Vedi che sì desideroso vegno
D' esser de' tuoi, ch' io ti somiglio in fede.
Vieni, chè 'l cor ti chiede.'
Poi mi partia, consumato ogni duolo ;
E quando io era solo,
Dicea, guardando verso l' alto regno :
' Beato, anima bella, chi ti vede !'
Voi mi chiamaste allor, vostra mercede."

Questa canzone ha due parti : nella prima dico, parlando a indiffinita persona, com' io fui levato d' una vana fantasia da certe donne, e come promisi loro di dirla ; nella seconda dico, com' io dissi a loro. La seconda comincia quivi : "Mentr' io pensava." La prima parte si divide in due : nella prima dico quello che certe donne, e che una sola, dissero e fecero per la mia fantasia, quanto è dinanzi ch' io fossi tornato in verace cognizione ; nella seconda dico quello che queste donne mi dissero, poich' io lasciai questo farneticare ; e comincia quivi : "Era la voce mia." Poscia quando dico : "Mentr' io

That I said : ‘ Death, I hold thee passing good
Henceforth, and a most gentle sweet relief,
Since my dear love has chosen to dwell with thee :
Pity, not hate, is thine, well understood.
Lo ! I do so desire to see thy face
That I am like as one who nears the tomb ;
My soul entreats thee, Come.’
Then I departed, having made my moan ;
And when I was alone
I said, and cast my eyes to the High Place :
‘ Blessed is he, fair soul, who meets thy glance ! ’
. . . . Just then you woke me, of your complai-
saunce.”

This poem has two parts. In the first, speaking to a person undefined, I tell how I was aroused from a vain phantasy by certain ladies, and how I promised them to tell what it was. In the second, I say how I told them. The second part begins here, “I was a-thinking.” The first part divides into two. In the first, I tell that which certain ladies, and which one singly, did and said because of my phantasy, before I had returned into my right senses. In the second, I tell what these ladies said to me after I had left off this wandering: and it begins here, “But uttered in a voice.” Then, when I say, “I was a-

pensava,” dico com’ io dissi loro questa mia imaginazione ; e intorno a ciò fò due parti. Nella prima dico per ordine questa imaginazione ; nella seconda, dicendo a che ora mi chiamaro, le ringrazio chiusamente ; e questa parte comincia quivi : “ Voi mi chiamaste.”



Appresso questa vana imaginazione, avvenne un dì, che sedendo io pensoso in alcuna parte, ed io mi sentii cominciare un tremito nel core, così come s’ io fossi stato presente a questa donna. Allora dico che mi giunse una imaginazione d’ Amore : che mi parve vederlo venire da quella parte ove la mia donna stava ; e pareami che lietamente mi dicesse nel cor mio : “ Pensa di benedire lo dì ch’ io ti presi, però che tu lo dèi fare.” E certo mi pareva avere lo core così lieto, che mi pareva che non fosse lo core mio, per la sua nova condizione. E poco dopo queste parole, che ’l core mi disse con la lingua d’ Amore, io vidi venire verso me una gentil donna, la quale era di famosa beltade, e fu già molto donna

thinking," I say how I told them this my imagination ; and concerning this I have two parts. In the first, I tell, in order, this imagination. In the second, saying at what time they called me, I covertly thank them : and this part begins here, " Just then you woke me."



After this empty imagining, it happened on a day, as I sat thoughtful, that I was taken with such a strong trembling at the heart, that it could not have been otherwise in the presence of my lady. Whereupon I perceived that there was an appearance of Love beside me, and I seemed to see him coming from my lady ; and he said, not aloud, but within my heart : " Now take heed that thou bless the day when I entered into thee ; for it is fitting that thou shouldst do so." And with that my heart was so full of gladness, that I could hardly believe it to be of very truth mine own heart and not another. A short while after these words which my heart spoke to me with the tongue of Love, I saw coming towards me a certain lady who was very famous for her beauty, and of whom that friend whom I have

di questo mio primo amico. E lo nome di questa donna era Giovanna, salvo che per la sua beltade, secondo ch' altri crede, imposto l' era nome Primavera: e così era chiamata. E appresso lei guardando, vidi venire la mirabile Beatrice. Queste donne andaro presso di me così l' una appresso l' altra, e parvemi che Amore mi parlasse nel core, e dicesse: "Quella prima è nominata Primavera solo per questa venuta d' oggi; chè io mossi lo impositore del nome a chiamarla *Primavera*, cioè *prima verrà*, lo dì che Beatrice si mostrerà dopo l' imaginazione del suo fedele. E se anco vuoi considerare lo primo nome suo, tanto è quanto dire Primavera, perchè lo suo nome Giovanna è da quel Giovanni, lo quale precedette la verace luce, dicendo: '*Ego vox clamantis in deserto: parate viam Domini.*'" Ed anche mi parve che mi dicesse, dopo queste, altre parole, cioè: "Chi volesse sottilmente considerare, quella Beatrice chiamerebbe Amore, per molta simiglianza che ha meco." Ond' io poi ripensando, proposi di scriverne per rima

already called the first among my friends had long been enamoured. This lady's right name was Joan ; but because of her comeliness (or at least it was so imagined) she was called of many *Primavera* (Spring), and went by that name among them. Then looking again, I perceived that the most noble Beatrice followed after her. And when both these ladies had passed by me, it seemed to me that Love spake again in my heart, saying : " She that came first was called Spring, only because of that which was to happen on this day. And it was I myself who caused that name to be given her ; seeing that as the Spring cometh first in the year, so should she come first on this day, when Beatrice was to show herself after the vision of her servant. And even if thou go about to consider her right name, it is also as one should say, ' She shall come first ; ' inasmuch as her name, Joan, is taken from that John who went before the True Light, saying : ' I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness : Prepare ye the way of the Lord.' " And also it seemed to me that he added other words, to wit : " He who should inquire delicately touching this matter, could not but call Beatrice by mine own name, which is to say, Love ; beholding her so like unto me." Then I, having thought of this, imagined to write it with rhymes

al primo mio amico (tacendomi certe parole le quali pareano da tacere), credendo io che ancora il suo cuore mirasse la beltà di questa Primavera gentile. E dissi questo sonetto:

Io mi sentii svegliar dentro allo core
Uno spirto amoroso che dormia :
E poi vidi venir da lungi Amore
Allegro sì, che appena il conoscia ;
Dicendo : “ Or pensa pur di farmi onore ; ”
E 'n ciascuna parola sua ridia.
E, poco stando meco il mio signore,
Guardando in quella parte, onde venia,
Io vidi monna Vanna e monna Bice
Venire invêr lo loco là ov' i' era,
L' una appresso dell' altra meraviglia :
E sì come la mente mi ridice,
Amor mi disse : “ Questa è Primavera,
E quella ha nome Amor, sì mi somiglia.”

Questo sonetto ha molte parti: la prima delle quali dice, come io mi sentii svegliare lo tremore usato nel core, e come parve che Amore m' apparisse allegro da lunga parte; la seconda dice, come mi parve che Amore mi dicesse nel mio core, e quale mi pareva; la terza dice come, poi che questo fu alquanto stato meco cotale, io vidi ed udii certe cose. La seconda parte

and send it unto my chief friend ; but setting aside certain words which seemed proper to be set aside, because I believed that his heart still regarded the beauty of her that was called Spring. And I wrote this sonnet :
I felt a spirit of love begin to stir

 Within my heart, long time unfelt till then ;
 And saw Love coming towards me, fair and fain,
 (That I scarce knew him for his joyful cheer,)
Saying, " Be now indeed my worshipper ! "
 And in his speech he laugh'd and laugh'd again.
 Then, while it was his pleasure to remain,
 I chanced to look the way he had drawn near,
And saw the Ladies Joan and Beatrice
 Approach me, this the other following,
 One and a second marvel instantly.
And even as now my memory speaketh this,
 Love spake it then : " The first it christen'd Spring ;
 The second Love, she is so like to me."

This sonnet has many parts : whereof the first tells how I felt awakened within my heart the accustomed tremor, and how it seemed that Love appeared to me joyful from afar. The second says how it appeared to me that Love spake within my heart, and what was his aspect. The third tells how, after he had in such wise been with me a space, I saw and heard certain things. The second part

comincia quivi: “Dicendo: ‘Or pensa pur;’” la terza quivi: “E poco stando.” La terza parte si divide in due: nella prima dico quello ch’ io vidi; nella seconda dico quello ch’ io udii; e comincia quivi: “Amor mi disse.”



Potrebbe qui dubitar persona degna di dichiararle ogni dubitazione, e dubitar potrebbe di ciò ch’ io dico d’ Amore, come se fosse una cosa per sè, e non solamente sostanza intelligente, ma come sì come fosse sostanza corporale. La qual cosa, secondo verità, è falsa; chè Amore non è per sè sì come sostanza, ma è un accidente in sostanza. E che io dica di lui come se fosse corpo, ed ancora come se fosse uomo, appare per tre cose che io dico di lui. Dico che ’l vidi di lungi venire; onde, conciossiacosà che *venire* dica moto locale (e localmente mobile per sè, secondo il filosofo, sia solamente corpo), appare che io ponga Amore essere corpo. Dico anche di lui che rideva, ed anche che parlava; le quali cose paiono esser proprie dell’ uomo, e specialmente esser risibile;

begins here, "Saying, 'Be now ;'" the third here, "Then, while it was his pleasure." The third part divides into two. In the first, I say what I saw. In the second, I say what I heard : and it begins here, "Love spake it then."



It might be here objected unto me, (and even by one worthy of controversy,) that I have spoken of Love as though it were a thing outward and visible : not only a spiritual essence, but as a bodily substance also. The which thing, in absolute truth, is a fallacy ; Love not being of itself a substance, but an accident of substance. Yet that I speak of Love as though it were a thing tangible and even human, appears by three things which I say thereof. And firstly, I say that I perceived Love coming towards me ; whereby, seeing that *to come* bespeaks locomotion, and seeing also how philosophy teacheth us that none but a corporeal substance hath locomotion, it seemeth that I speak of Love as of a corporeal substance. And secondly, I say that Love smiled ; and thirdly, that Love spake ; faculties (and especially the risible faculty)

e però appare ch' io pongo lui esser uomo. A cotal cosa dichiarare, secondo ch' è buono al presente, prima è da intendere, che anticamente non erano dicitori d' Amore in lingua volgare, anzi erano dicitori d' Amore certi poeti in lingua latina: tra noi, dico, avvegna forse che tra altra gente addivenisse, e avvegna ancora che, sì come in Grecia, non volgari ma litterati poeti queste cose trattavano. E non è molto numero d' anni passato, che apparirono prima questi poeti volgari; chè dire per rima in volgare tanto è quanto dire per versi in latino, secondo alcuna proporzione. E segno che sia picciol tempo è, che, se volemo cercare n lingua d' *oco* e in lingua di *sì*, noi non troveremo cose dette anzi lo presente tempo per CL anni. E la cagione, per che alquanti grossi ebbero fama di saper dire, è che quasi furono i primi che dissero in lingua di *sì*. E lo primo che cominciò a dire sì come poeta volgare, si mosse però che volle fare intendere le sue parole a donna, alla quale era malagevole ad intendere i versi latini. E questo è contro a coloro, che rimano

which appear proper unto man : whereby it further seemeth that I speak of Love as of a man. Now that this matter may be explained, (as is fitting,) it must first be remembered that anciently they who wrote poems of Love wrote not in the vulgar tongue, but rather certain poets in the Latin tongue. I mean, among us, although perchance the same may have been among others, and although likewise, as among the Greeks, they were not writers of spoken language, but men of letters, treated of these things. And indeed it is not a great number of years since poetry began to be made in the vulgar tongue ; the writing of rhymes in spoken language corresponding to the writing in metre of Latin verse, by a certain analogy. And I say that it is but a little while, because if we examine the language of *oco* and the language of *si* we shall not find in those tongues any written thing of an earlier date than the last hundred and fifty years. Also the reason why certain of a very mean sort obtained at the first some fame as poets is, that before them no man had written verses in the language of *si* : and of these, the first was moved to the writing of such verses by the wish to make himself understood of a certain lady, unto whom Latin poetry was difficult. This thing is against such as rhyme

sopra altra materia che amorosa; conciossiacosa che cotal modo di parlare fosse dal principio trovato per dire d' Amore. Onde, conciossiacosa che a' poeti sia conceduta maggior licenza di parlare che alli prosaici dicitori, e questi dicitori per rima non sieno altro che poeti volgari, è degno e ragionevole, che a loro sia maggior licenza largita di parlare, che agli altri parlatori volgari: onde, se alcuna figura o colore rettorico è concesso alli poeti, concesso è a' rimatori. Dunque se noi vedemo che li poeti hanno parlato delle cose inanimate come se avessero senso e ragione, e fattole parlare insieme; e non solamente cose vere, ma cose non vere (cioè che detto hanno, di cose le quali non sono, che parlano, e detto che molti accidenti parlano, sì come fossero sostanze ed uomini); degno è lo dicitore per rima fare lo simigliante, non senza ragione alcuna, ma con ragione, la quale poi sia possibile d' aprire per prosa. Che li poeti abbiano così parlato, come detto è, appare per Virgilio; il quale dice che Giuno, cioè una dea nemica dei Troiani, parlò ad Eolo

concerning other matters than love ; that mode of speech having been first used for the expression of love alone. Wherefore seeing that poets have a licence allowed them that is not allowed unto the writers of prose, and seeing also that they who write in rhyme are simply poets in the vulgar tongue, it becomes fitting and reasonable that a larger licence should be given to these than to other modern writers ; and that any metaphor or rhetorical similitude which is permitted unto poets, should also be counted not unseemly in the rhymers of the vulgar tongue. Thus, if we perceive that the former have caused inanimate things to speak as though they had sense and reason, and to discourse one with another ; yea, and not only actual things, but such also as have no real existence, (seeing that they have made things which are not, to speak ; and oftentimes written of those which are merely accidents as though they were substances and things human ;) it should therefore be permitted to the latter to do the like ; which is to say, not inconsiderately, but with such sufficient motive as may afterwards be set forth in prose. That the Latin poets have done thus, appears through Virgil, where he saith that Juno (to wit, a goddess hostile to the Trojans) spake unto Æolus,

signore delli venti, quivi nel primo dell' *Eneida*: "*Æole, namque tibi*" etc., e che questo signore rispose quivi: "*Tuus, o regina, quid optes Explorare labor; mihi iussa capessere fas est.*" Per questo medesimo poeta parla la cosa, che non è animata, alla cosa animata nel terzo dell' *Eneida*, quivi: "*Dardanidæ duri*" etc. Per Lucano parla la cosa animata alla cosa inanimata, quivi: "*Multum, Roma, tamen debes civilibus armis.*" Per Orazio parla l' uomo alla sua scienza medesima, sì come ad altra persona; e non solamente sono parole d' Orazio, ma dicele quasi medio del buono Omero, quivi nella sua *Poetria*: "*Dic mihi, Musa, virum*" etc. Per Ovidio parla Amore, come se fosse persona umana, nel principio del libro che ha nome *Rimedio d' Amore*, quivi: "*Bella mihi, video, bella parantur, ait.*" E per questo puote essere manifesto a chi dubita in alcuna parte di questo mio libello. E acciò che non ne pigli alcuna baldanza persona grossa, dico che nè li poeti parlano così senza ragione, nè que' che rimano deono così parlare, non avendo alcuno ragionamento in loro di quello che dicono; però che grande vergogna sarebbe a colui, che rimasse cosa sotto

master of the Winds ; as it is written in the first book of the *Æneid*, "*Æole, namque tibi*" etc.; and that this master of the Winds made reply : "*Tuus, o regina, quid optes Explorare labor ; mihi iussa capessere fas est.*" And through the same poet, the inanimate thing speaketh unto the animate, in the third book of the *Æneid*, where it is written : "*Dardanidæ duri*" etc. With Lucan, the animate thing speaketh to the inanimate ; as thus : "*Multum, Roma, tamen debes civilibus armis.*" In Horace man is made to speak to his own intelligence as unto another person ; (and not only hath Horace done this, but herein he followeth the excellent Homer,) as thus in his *Poetics* : "*Dic mihi, Musa, virum*" etc. Through Ovid, Love speaketh as a human creature in the beginning of his discourse *De Remediis Amoris*, as thus : "*Bella mihi, video, bella parantur, ait.*" By which ensamples this thing shall be made manifest unto such as may be offended at any part of this my book. And lest some of the common sort should be moved to jeering hereat, I will here add, that neither did these ancient poets speak thus without consideration, nor should they who are makers of rhyme in our day write after the same fashion, having no reason in what they write ; for it were a shameful thing if one should rhyme under the

veste di figura o di colore rettorico, e poi domandato non sapesse dinudare le sue parole da cotal veste, in guisa ch' avessero verace intendimento. E questo mio primo amico ed io ne sapemo bene di quelli che così rimano stoltamente.



Questa gentilissima donna, di cui ragionato è nelle precedenti parole, venne in tanta grazia delle genti, che quando passava per via, le persone correano per vederla; onde mirabile letizia me ne giungea. E quando ella fosse presso ad alcuno, tanta onestà venia nel core di quello, ch' egli non ardia di levare gli occhi, nè di rispondere al suo saluto; e di questo molti, sì come esperti, mi potrebbero testimoniare a chi nol credesse. Ella coronata e vestita d' umiltà s' andava, nulla gloria mostrando di ciò ch' ella vedeva ed udiva. Dicevano molti, poi che passata era: "Questa non è femina, anzi è uno de' bellissimi angeli del cielo." Ed altri dicevano: "Questa è una meraviglia; che benedetto sia lo Signore che

semblance of metaphor or rhetorical similitude, and afterwards, being questioned thereof, should be unable to rid his words of such semblance, unto their right understanding. Of whom, (to wit, of such as rhyme thus foolishly,) myself and the first among my friends do know many.



But returning to the matter of my discourse. This excellent lady, of whom I spake in what hath gone before, came at last into such favour with all men, that when she passed anywhere folk ran to behold her ; which thing was a deep joy to me : and when she drew near unto any, so much truth and simpleness entered into his heart, that he dared neither to lift his eyes nor to return her salutation : and unto this, many who have felt it can bear witness. She went along crowned and clothed with humility, showing no whit of pride in all that she heard and saw : and when she had gone by, it was said of many, “ This is not a woman, but one of the beautiful angels of Heaven ! ” and there were some that said : “ This is surely a miracle ; blessed be the Lord, who

sì mirabilmente sa operare!” Io dico ch’ ella si mostrava sì gentile e sì piena di tutti i piaceri, che quelli che la miravano comprendevano in loro una dolcezza onesta e soave tanto che ridire non la sapevano ; nè alcuno era lo quale potesse mirar lei, che nel principio non gli convenisse sospirare. Queste e più mirabili cose da lei procedeano mirabilmente e virtuosamente. Ond’ io pensando a ciò, volendo ripigliare lo stile della sua loda, proposi di dire parole, nelle quali dessi ad intendere delle sue mirabili ed eccellenti operazioni ; acciò che non pure coloro che la poteano sensibilmente vedere, ma gli altri sapessero di lei quello che le parole ne possono fare intendere. Allora dissi questo sonetto :

Tanto gentile e tanto onesta pare

La donna mia, quand’ ella altrui saluta,

Ch’ ogni lingua divien tremando muta,

E gli occhi non ardiscon di guardare.

Ella sen va, sentendosi laudare,

Benignamente d’ umiltà vestuta ;

[E par che sia una cosa venuta
Di cielo in terra a miracol mostrare.]

Mostrasi sì piacente a chi la mira,

* Che dà per gli occhi una dolcezza al core,

hath power to work thus marvellously.” I say, of very sooth, that she showed herself so gentle and so full of all perfection, that she bred in those who looked upon her a soothing quiet beyond any speech ; neither could any look upon her without sighing immediately. These things, and things yet more wonderful, were brought to pass through her miraculous virtue. Wherefore I, considering thereof and wishing to resume the endless tale of her praises, resolved to write somewhat wherein I might dwell on her surpassing influence ; to the end that not only they who had beheld her, but others also, might know as much concerning her as words could give to the understanding. And it was then that I wrote this sonnet :

My lady looks so gentle and so pure
When yielding salutation by the way,
That the tongue trembles and has nought to say,
And the eyes, which fain would see, may not endure.
And still, amid the praise she hears secure,
She walks with humbleness for her array ;
Seeming a creature sent from Heaven to stay
On earth, and show a miracle made sure.
She is so pleasant in the eyes of men
That through the sight the inmost heart doth gain

Che intender non la può chi non la prova.
E par che della sua labbia si muova
Un spirito soave e pien d' amore,
Che va dicendo all' anima : "Sospira."✱

Questo sonetto è sì piano ad intendere, per quello che narrato è dinanzi, che non ha bisogno d' alcuna divisione ; e però lasciando lui,



Dico che questa mia donna venne in tanta grazia, che non solamente era ella onorata e laudata, ma per lei erano onorate e laudate molte. Ond' io veggendo ciò e volendo manifestare a chi ciò non vedea, proposi anche di dire parole, nelle quali ciò fosse significato : e dissi questo sonetto, lo quale narra come la sua virtù adoperava nelle altre.

Vede perfettamente ogni salute
Chi la mia donna tra le donne vede :
Quelle, che van con lei, sono tenute
Di bella grazia a Dio render mercede.
E sua beltate è di tanta virtute,

A sweetness which needs proof to know it by :
And from between her lips there seems to move
A soothing spirit that is full of love,
Saying for ever to the soul, " O sigh ! "

*This sonnet is so easy to understand, from what is afore
narrated, that it needs no division : and therefore, leaving it,*



I say also that this excellent lady came into such
favour with all men, that not only she herself was
honoured and commended ; but through her com-
panionship, honour and commendation came unto
others. Wherefore I, perceiving this and wishing
that it should also be made manifest to those that
beheld it not, wrote the sonnet here following ;
wherein is signified the power which her virtue had
upon other ladies :

For certain he hath seen all perfectness

Who among other ladies hath seen mine :

They that go with her humbly should combine

To thank their God for such peculiar grace.

So perfect is the beauty of her face

Che nulla invidia all' altre ne procede,
Anzi le face andar seco vestute
Di gentilezza, d' amore e di fede.
La vista sua face ogni cosa umile,
E non fa sola sè parer piacente,
Ma ciascuna per lei riceve onore.
Ed è negli atti suoi tanto gentile,
Che nessun la si può recare a mente,
Che non sospiri in dolcezza d' amore.

Questo sonetto ha tre parti : nella prima dico tra che gente questa donna più mirabile pareva ; nella seconda dico come era graziosa la sua compagnia ; nella terza dico di quelle cose ch' ella virtuosamente operava in altrui. La seconda comincia quivi : " Quelle che van ; " la terza quivi : " E sua beltate. " Quest' ultima parte si divide in tre : nella prima dico quello che operava nelle donne, cioè per loro medesime ; nella seconda dico quello che operava in loro per altrui ; nella terza dico come non solamente nelle donne operava, ma in tutte le persone, e non solamente nella sua presenza, ma, ricordandosi di lei, mirabilmente operava. La seconda comincia quivi : " La vista ; " la terza quivi : " Ed è negli atti. "



That it begets in no wise any sign
Of envy, but draws round her a clear line
Of love, and blessed faith, and gentleness.
Merely the sight of her makes all things bow :
Not she herself alone is holier
Than all ; but hers, through her, are raised above.
From all her acts such lovely graces flow
That truly one may never think of her
Without a passion of exceeding love.

This sonnet has three parts. In the first, I say in what company this lady appeared most wondrous. In the second, I say how gracious was her society. In the third, I tell of the things which she, with power, worked upon others. The second begins here, "They that go with her;" the third here, "So perfect." This last part divides into three. In the first, I tell what she operated upon women, that is, by their own faculties. In the second, I tell what she operated in them through others. In the third, I say how she not only operated in women, but in all people; and not only while herself present, but, by memory of her, operated wondrously. The second begins here, "Merely the sight;" the third here, "From all her acts."



Appresso ciò, cominciai a pensare un giorno sopra quello che detto avea della mia donna, cioè in questi due sonetti precedenti ; e veggendo nel mio pensiero ch' io non avea detto di quello che al presente tempo adoperava in me, parvemi difettivamente aver parlato ; e però proposi di dire parole, nelle quali io dicessi come mi pareva esser disposto alla sua operazione, e come operava in me la sua virtude. E non credendo ciò poter narrare in brevità di sonetto, cominciai allora una canzone, la quale comincia :

Sì lungamente m' ha tenuto Amore,
E costumato alla sua signoria,
Che sì com' egli m' era forte in pria,
Così mi sta soave ora nel core.
Però quando mi toglie sì 'l valore,
Che gli spiriti par che fuggan via,
Allor sente la frale anima mia
Tanta dolcezza, che 'l viso ne smuore.
Poi prende Amore in me tanta virtute,
Che fa li miei sospiri gir parlando ;
Ed escon fuor chiamando
La donna mia, per darmi più salute.

Thereafter on a day, I began to consider that which I had said of my lady : to wit, in these two sonnets aforegone : and becoming aware that I had not spoken of her immediate effect on me at that especial time, it seemed to me that I had spoken defectively. Whereupon I resolved to write somewhat of the manner wherein I was then subject to her influence, and of what her influence then was. And conceiving that I should not be able to say these things in the small compass of a sonnet, I began therefore a poem with this beginning :

Love hath so long possess'd me for his own
And made his lordship so familiar
That he, who at first irk'd me, is now grown
Unto my heart as its best secrets are.
And thus, when he in such sore wise doth
mar
My life that all its strength seems gone from it,
Mine inmost being then feels thoroughly quit
Of anguish, and all evil keeps afar.
Love also gathers to such power in me
That my sighs speak, each one a grievous thing.
Always soliciting
My lady's salutation piteously.

Questo m' avviene ovunque ella mi vede,
E sì è cosa umil, che non si crede.



“ Quomodo sedet sola civitas plena populo ! facta est quasi vidua domina gentium.”

Io era nel proponimento ancora di questa canzone, e compiuta n' avea questa sovrascritta stanza, quando lo Signore della giustizia chiamò questa gentilissima a gloriare sotto l' insegna di quella reina benedetta Maria, lo cui nome fue in grandissima reverenza nelle parole di questa Beatrice beata. Ed avvegna che forse piacerebbe al presente trattare alquanto della sua partita da noi, non è mio intendimento di trattarne qui per tre ragioni: la prima si è, che ciò non è del presente proposito, se volemo guardare nel proemio, che precede questo libello; la seconda si è che, posto che fosse del presente proposito, ancora non sarebbe sufficiente la mia penna a trattare, come si converrebbe, di ciò; la terza si è che, posto che fosse l' uno e l' altro, non è convenevole a me trattare di ciò, per quello che,

Whenever she beholds me, it is so,
Who is more sweet than any words can show.



“How doth the city sit solitary, that was full of people ! how is she become a widow !”

I was still occupied with this poem, (having composed thereof only the above-written stanza,) when the Lord God of justice called my most gracious lady unto Himself, that she might be glorious under the banner of that blessed Queen Mary, whose name had always a deep reverence in the words of holy Beatrice. And because haply it might be found good that I should say somewhat concerning her departure, I will herein declare what are the reasons which make that I shall not do so. And the reasons are three. The first is, that such matter belongeth not of right to the present argument, if one consider the opening of this little book. The second is, that even though the present argument required it, my pen doth not suffice to write in a fit manner of this thing. And the third is, that were it both possible and of absolute necessity, it would still be unseemly for me to speak thereof, seeing that

trattando, mi converrebbe essere lodatore di me medesimo (la qual cosa è al postutto biasimevole a chi 'l fa), e però lascio cotale trattato ad altro chiosatore. * Tuttavia, perchè molte volte il numero del nove ha preso luogo tra le parole dinanzi, onde pare che sia non senza ragione, * e nella sua partita cotale numero pare che avesse molto luogo, conviensi qui dire alcuna cosa, acciò che pare al proposito convenirsi. Onde prima dirò come ebbe luogo nella sua partita, e poi ne assegnerò alcuna ragione, perchè questo numero fu a lei cotanto amico.



Io dico che, secondo l' usanza d' Italia, l' anima sua nobilissima si partì nella prima ora del nono giorno del mese ; e secondo l' usanza di Siria, ella si partì nel nono mese dell' anno ; perchè il primo mese è ivi Tismin, il quale a noi è Ottobre. E secondo l' usanza nostra, ella si partì in quello anno della nostra indizione, cioè degli anni Domini, in cui

thereby it must behove me to speak also mine own praises : a thing that in whosoever doeth it is worthy of blame. For the which reasons, I will leave this matter to be treated of by some other than myself.

Nevertheless, as the number nine, which number hath often had mention in what hath gone before, (and not, as it might appear, without reason,) seems also to have borne a part in the manner of her death : it is therefore right that I should say somewhat thereof. And for this cause, having first said what was the part it bore herein, I will afterwards point out a reason which made that this number was so closely allied unto my lady.



* I say, then, that according to the division of time in Italy, her most noble spirit departed from among us in the first hour of the ninth day of the month ; and according to the division of time in Syria, in the ninth month of the year : seeing that Tismim, which with us is October, is there the first month. Also she was taken from among us in that year of our reckoning (to wit, of the years of our Lord) in which

il perfetto numero nove volte era compiuto in quel centinaio, nel quale in questo mondo ella fu posta: ed ella fu de' cristiani del terzodecimo centinaio. Perchè questo numero le fosse tanto amico, questa potrebb' essere una ragione; conciossiacosa che, secondo Tolomeo e secondo la cristiana verità, nove siano li cieli che si muovono, e secondo comune opinione astrologica li detti cieli adoperino quaggiù secondo la loro abitudine insieme; questo numero fu amico di lei per dare ad intendere, che nella sua generazione tutti e nove li mobili cieli perfettissimamente s' aveano insieme. Questa è una ragione di ciò; ma più sottilmente pensando, e secondo la infallibile verità, questo numero fu ella medesima; per similitudine dico, e ciò intendo così: Lo numero del tre è la radice del nove, però che senz' altro numero, per sè medesimo moltiplicato, fa nove, sì come vedemo manifestamente che tre via tre fa nove. Dunque se il tre è fattore per sè medesimo del nove, e lo fattore dei' miracoli per sè medesimo è tre, cioè Padre, Figliuolo e Spirito Santo, li quali sono tre ed uno, questa donna fu accompagnata dal numero

the perfect number was nine times multiplied within that century wherein she was born into the world : which is to say, the thirteenth century of Christians. And touching the reason why this number was so closely allied unto her, it may peradventure be this. According to Ptolemy, (and also to the Christian verity,) the revolving heavens are nine ; and according to the common opinion among astrologers, these nine heavens together have influence over the earth. Wherefore it would appear that this number was thus allied unto her for the purpose of signifying that, at her birth, all these nine heavens were at perfect unity with each other as to their influence. This is one reason that may be brought : but more narrowly considering, and according to the infallible truth, this number was her own self : that is to say by similitude. As thus. The number three is the root of the number nine ; seeing that without the interposition of any other number, being multiplied merely by itself, it produceth nine, as we manifestly perceive that three times three are nine. Thus, three being of itself the efficient of nine, and the Great Efficient of Miracles being of Himself Three Persons (to wit : the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit), which, being Three, are also One :—this lady was accompanied by the number

del nove a dare ad intendere, che ella era un nove, cioè un miracolo, la cui radice è solamente la mirabile Trinitade. Forse ancora per più sottil persona si vedrebbe in ciò più sottil ragione ; ma questa è quella ch' io ne veggio, e che più mi piace.



Poi che la gentilissima donna fu partita da questo secolo, rimase tutta la sopradetta cittade quasi vedova e dispogliata di ogni dignitade, ond' io, ancora lagrimando in questa desolata cittade, scrissi a' principi della terra alquanto della sua condizione, pigliando quello cominciamento di Geremia : “ *Quomodo sedet sola civitas !* ” E questo dico, acciò che altri non si meravigli, perchè io l' abbia allegato di sopra, quasi come entrata della nuova materia che appresso viene. E se alcuno volesse me riprendere di ciò che non scrivo qui le parole che seguitano a quelle allegate, scusomene, però che lo intendimento mio non fu da principio di scrivere altro che per volgare : onde, conciossiacosa che le parole, che seguitano a quelle che sono allegate, sieno tutte latine, sarebbe fuori

nine to the end that men might clearly perceive her to be a nine, that is, a miracle, whose only root is the Holy Trinity. It may be that a more subtile person would find for this thing a reason of greater subtilty : but such is the reason that I find, and that liketh me best.



After this most gracious creature had gone out from among us, the whole city came to be as it were widowed and despoiled of all dignity. Then I, left mourning in this desolate city, wrote unto the principal persons thereof, in an epistle, concerning its condition ; taking for my commencement those words of Jeremias : “How doth the city sit solitary !” And I make mention of this, that none may marvel wherefore I set down these words before, in beginning to treat of her death. Also if any should blame me, in that I do not transcribe that epistle whereof I have spoken, I will make it mine excuse that I began this little book with the intent that it should be written altogether in the vulgar tongue ; wherefore, seeing that the epistle I speak of is in Latin, it belongeth

del mio intendimento se io le scrivessi ; e simile intenzione so che ebbe questo mio amico, a cui ciò scrivo, cioè ch' io gli scrivessi solamente in volgare.



Poi che gli occhi miei ebbero per alquanto tempo lagrimato, e tanto affaticati erano ch' io non potea disfogare la mia tristizia, pensai di voler disfogarla con alquante parole dolorose ; e però proposi di fare una canzone, nella quale piangendo ragionassi di lei, per cui tanto dolore era fatto distruggitore dell' anima mia ; e cominciai allora : “ Gli occhi dolenti ” ec.

Acciò che questa canzone paia rimanere viepiù vedova dopo il suo fine, la dividerò prima ch' io la scriva : e cotal modo terrò da qui innanzi. Io dico che questa cattivella canzone ha tre parti : la prima è proemio ; nella seconda ragiono di lei ; nella terza parlo alla canzone pietosamente. La seconda comincia quivi : “ Ita n' è Beatrice ; ” la terza quivi : “ Pietosa mia canzone. ” La prima si divide in tre : nella prima dico per che mi muovo a dire ; nella seconda dico, a cui voglio dire ;

not to mine undertaking : more especially as I know that my chief friend, for whom I write this book, wished also that the whole of it should be in the vulgar tongue.



When mine eyes had wept for some while, until they were so weary with weeping that I could no longer through them give ease to my sorrow, I bethought me that a few mournful words might stand me instead of tears. And therefore I proposed to make a poem, that weeping I might speak therein of her for whom so much sorrow had destroyed my spirit ; and then I began "The eyes that weep."

That this poem may seem to remain the more widowed at its close, I will divide it before writing it ; and this method I will observe henceforward. I say that this poor little poem has three parts. The first is a prelude. In the second, I speak of her. In the third, I speak pitifully to the poem. The second begins here, " Beatrice is gone up ; " the third here, " Weep, pitiful Song of mine." The first divides into three. In the first, I say what moves me to speak. In the second, I say to whom I mean to speak.

nella terza dico, di cui voglio dire. La seconda comincia quivi: "E perchè mi ricorda;" la terza quivi: "E dicerò." Poscia quando dico: "Ita n' è Beatrice," ragiono di lei, e intorno a ciò fo due parti. Prima dico la cagione perchè tolta ne fu; appresso dico come altri si piange della sua partita, e comincia questa parte quivi: "Partissi della sua." Questa parte si divide in tre: nella prima dico chi non la piange; nella seconda dico chi la piange; nella terza dico della mia condizione. La seconda comincia quivi: "Ma vien tristizia e doglia;" la terza: "Dannomi angoscia." Poscia quando dico: "Pietosa mia canzone," parlo a questa mia canzone, designandole a quali donne sen vada, e steasi con loro.

Gli occhi dolenti per pietà del core
Hanno di lagrimar sofferta pena,
Sì che per vinti son rimasi omai.
Ora s' io voglio sfogar^{lo} lo dolore,
Che a poco a poco alla morte mi mena,
Convenemi parlar traendo guai.
E perchè mi ricorda ch' io parlai
Della mia donna, mentre che vivia,
Donne gentili, volentier con vui,
Non vo' pariarne altrui,

In the third, I say of whom I mean to speak. The second begins here, "And because often, thinking;" the third here, "And I will say." Then, when I say, "Beatrice is gone up," I speak of her; and concerning this I have two parts. First, I tell the cause why she was taken away from us: afterwards, I say how one weeps her parting; and this part commences here, "Wonderfully." This part divides into three. In the first, I say who it is that weeps her not. In the second, I say who it is that doth weep her. In the third, I speak of my condition. The second begins here, "But sighing comes, and grief;" the third, "With sighs." Then, when I say, "Weep, pitiful Song of mine," I speak to this my song, telling it what ladies to go to, and stay with.

The eyes that weep for pity of the heart
Have wept so long that their grief languisheth
And they have no more tears to weep withal:
And now, if I would ease me of a part
Of what, little by little, leads to death,
It must be done by speech, or not at all.
And because often, thinking, I recall
How it was pleasant, ere she went afar,
To talk of her with you, kind damozels,
I talk with no one else,

Se non a cor gentil che 'n donna sia ;
E dicerò di lei piangendo, pui
Che se n' è gita in ciel subitamente,
Ed ha lasciato Amor meco dolente.

Ita n' è Beatrice in l' alto cielo,
Nel reame ove gli angeli hanno pace,
E sta con loro ; e voi, donne, ha lasciate.
Non la ci tolse qualità di gelo,
Nè di calor, sì come l' altre face ;
Ma sola fu sua gran benignitate.
Chè luce della sua umilitate
Passò li cieli con tanta virtute,
Che fe' maravigliar l' eterno Sire,
Sì che dolce desire
Lo giunse di chiamar tanta salute ;
E fella di quaggiuso a sè venire ;
Perchè vedea ch' esta vita noiosa
Non era degna di sì gentil cosa.

Partissi della sua bella persona
Piena di grazia l' anima gentile,
Ed èssi gloriosa in loco degno.
Chi non la piange, quando ne ragiona,
Core ha di pietra sì malvagio e vile,
Ch' entrar non vi può spirito benegno.

But only with such hearts as women's are.
And I will say,—still sobbing as speech fails,—
That she hath gone to Heaven suddenly,
And hath left Love below, to mourn with me.

Beatrice is gone up into high Heaven,
The kingdom where the angels are at peace ;
And lives with them ; and to her friends is dead.
Not by the frost of winter was she driven
Away, like others ; nor by summer-heats ;
But through a perfect gentleness, instead.
For from the lamp of her meek lowlihead
Such an exceeding glory went up hence
That it woke wonder in the Eternal Sire,
Until a sweet desire
Enter'd Him for that lovely excellence,
So that He bade her to Himself aspire :
Counting this weary and most evil place
Unworthy of a thing so full of grace.

Wonderfully out of the beautiful form
Soar'd her clear spirit, waxing glad the while ;
And is in its first home, there where it is.
Who speaks thereof, and feels not the tears warm
Upon his face, must have become so vile
As to be dead to all sweet sympathies.

Non è di cor villan sì alto ingegno,
Che possa immaginar di lei alquanto,
E però non gli vien di pianger voglia :
Ma vien tristizia e doglia
Di sospirare e di morir di pianto,
E d' ogni consolar l' anima spoglia,
Chi vede nel pensiero alcuna volta
Qual ella fu, e com' ella n' è tolta.

Dannomi angoscia li sospiri forte,
Quando il pensiero nella mente grave
Mi reca quella che m' ha il cor diviso :
E spesse fiate pensando la morte,
Me ne viene un desio tanto soave,
Che mi tramuta lo color nel viso.
E quando 'l maginar mi tien ben fiso,
Giugnemi tanta pena d' ogni parte,
Ch' i' mi riscuoto per dolor ch' io sento ;
E sì fatto divento,
Che dalle genti vergogna mi parte.
Poscia piangendo, sol nel mio lamento
Chiamo Beatrice ; e dico : “ Or se' tu morta ! ”
E mentre ch' io la chiamo, mi conforta.

Pianger di doglia e sospirar d' angoscia
Mi strugge il core ovunque sol mi trovo,

Out upon him ! an abject wretch like this
May not imagine anything of her,—
He needs no bitter tears for his relief.
But sighing comes, and grief,
And the desire to find no comforter,
(Save only Death, who makes all sorrow brief,)
To him who for a while turns in his thought
How she hath been among us, and is not.

With sighs my bosom always laboureth
On thinking, as I do continually,
Of her for whom my heart now breaks apace ;
And very often when I think of death,
Such a great inward longing comes to me
That it will change the colour of my face ;
And, if the idea settles in its place,
All my limbs shake as with an ague-fit ;
Till, starting up in wild bewilderment,
I do become so shent
That I go forth, lest folk misdoubt of it.
Afterward, calling with a sore lament
On Beatrice, I ask, “Canst thou be dead ?”
And calling on her, I am comforted.

Grief with its tears, and anguish with its sighs
Come to me now whene'er I am alone ;

Sì che ne increscerebbe a chi 'l vedesse :
E qual è stata la mia vita, poscia
Che la mia donna andò nel secolo novo,
Lingua non è che dicer lo sapesse :
E però, donne mie, per ch' io volesse,
Non vi saprei ben dicer quel ch' io sono ;
Sì mi fa travagliar l' acerba vita ;
La quale è sì invilita,
Che ogni uom par che mi dica: "Io t'abbandono,"
Vedendo la mia labbia tramortita.
Ma qual ch' io sia, la mia donna sel vede,
Ed io ne spero ancor da lei mercede.

Pietosa mia canzone, or va piangendo ;
E ritrova le donne e le donzelle,
A cui le tue sorelle
Erano usate di portar letizia ;
E tu, che sei figliuola di tristizia,
Vattene sconsolata a star con elle.



Poi che detta fu questa canzone, si venne a me
uno, il quale secondo li gradi dell' amistade era

So that I think the sight of me gives pain.
And what my life hath been, that living dies,
Since for my lady the New Birth's begun,
I have not any language to explain.
And so, dear ladies, though my heart were fain,
I scarce could tell indeed how I am thus.
All joy is with my bitter life at war ;
Yea, I am fallen so far
That all men seem to say, "Go out from us,"
Eyeing my cold white lips, how dead they are.
But she, though I be bow'd unto the dust,
Watches me ; and will guerdon me, I trust.

Weep, pitiful Song of mine, upon thy way,
To the dames going, and the damozels,
For whom, and for none else,
Thy sisters have made music many a day.
Thou, that art very sad and not as they,
Go dwell thou with them as a mourner dwells.



After I had written this poem, I received the visit
of a friend whom I counted as second unto me in the

amico a me immediatamente dopo il primo : e questi fu tanto distretto di sanguinità con questa gloriosa, che nullo più presso l' era. E poi che fu meco a ragionare, mi pregò che io gli dovessi dire alcuna cosa per una donna che s' era morta ; e simulava sue parole, acciò che paresse che dicesse d' un' altra, la quale morta era cortamente : ond' io accorgendomi che questi dicea solo per quella benedetta, dissi di fare ciò che mi domandava lo suo prego. Ond' io poi pensando a ciò, proposi di fare un sonetto, nel quale mi lamentassi alquanto, e di darlo a questo mio amico, acciò che paresse, che per lui l' avessi fatto ; e dissi allora querto sonetto : “ Venite a intendere ” etc.

Questo sonetto ha due parti : nella prima chiamo li fedeli d' Amore che m' intendano ; nella seconda narro della mia misera condizione. La seconda comincia quivi : “ Li quali sconsolati.”

Venite a intender li sospiri miei,
O cor gentili, chè pietà il desia ;
Li quali sconsolati vanno via,
E s' e' non fosser, di dolor morrei.

degrees of friendship, and who, moreover, had been united by the nearest kindred to that most gracious creature. And when we had a little spoken together, he began to solicit me that I would write somewhat in memory of a lady who had died ; and he disguised his speech, so as to seem to be speaking of another who was but lately dead : wherefore I, perceiving that his speech was of none other than that blessed one herself, told him that it should be done as he required. Then afterwards, having thought thereof, I imagined to give vent in a sonnet to some part of my hidden lamentations : but in such sort that it might seem to be spoken by this friend of mine, to whom I was to give it. And the sonnet saith thus : “Stay now with me,” etc.

This sonnet has two parts. In the first, I call the Faithful of Love to hear me. In the second, I relate my miserable condition. The second begins here, “Mark how they force.”

Stay now with me, and listen to my sighs,
Ye piteous hearts, as pity bids ye do.
Mark how they force their way out and press
through ;
If they be once pent up, the whole life dies.

Però che gli occhi mi sarebbon rei
Molte fiate più ch' io non vorria,
Lasso ! di pianger sì la donna mia,
Ch' io sfogherei lo cor, piangendo lei.
Voi udirete lor chiamar sovente
La mia donna gentil, che se n' è gita
Al secol degno della sua virtute ;
E dispregiar talora questa vita,
In persona dell' anima dolente,
Abbandonata dalla sua salute.



Poi che detto ebbi questo sonetto, pensando chi questi era, cui lo intendeva dare quasi come per lui fatto, vidi che povero mi pareva lo servizio e nudo a così distretta persona di questa gloriosa. E però innanzi ch' io gli dessi il soprascritto sonetto, dissi due stanze di una canzone ; l' una per costui veracemente, e l' altra per me, avvegna che paia l' una e l' altra per una persona detta, a chi non guarda sottilmente. Ma chi sottilmente le mira vede bene che

Seeing that now indeed my weary eyes
Oftener refuse than I can tell to you,
(Even though my endless grief is ever new,)
To weep, and let the smother'd anguish rise.
Also in sighing ye shall hear me call
On her whose blessed presence doth enrich
The only home that well befitteth her :
And ye shall hear a bitter scorn of all
Sent from the inmost of my spirit in speech
That mourns its joy and its joy's minister.



But when I had written this sonnet, bethinking me who he was to whom I was to give it, that it might appear to be his speech, it seemed to me that this was but a poor and barren gift for one of her so near kindred. Wherefore, before giving him this sonnet, I wrote two stanzas of a poem: the first being written in very sooth as though it were spoken by him, but the other being mine own speech, albeit, unto one who should not look closely, they would both seem to be said by the same person. Nevertheless, looking closely, one must perceive that it is not

diverse persone parlano; in ciò che l' una non chiama sua donna costei, e l' altra sì, come appare manifestamente. Questa canzone e questo sonetto gli diedi, dicendo io che per lui solo fatto l' avea.

La canzone comincia : “Quantunque volte,” ed ha due parti : nell' una, cioè nella prima stanza, si lamenta questo mio caro amico, distretto a lei ; nella seconda mi lamento io, cioè nell' altra stanza che comincia : “E” si raccoglie.” E così appare che in questa canzone si lamentano due persone, l' una delle quali si lamenta come fratello, l' altra come servitore.

Quantunque volte, lasso ! mi rimembra
Ch' io non debbo giammai
Veder la donna, ond' io vo sì dolente,
Tanto dolore intorno al cor m' assembla
La dolorosa mente,
Ch' io dico : “ Anima mia, che non ten vai ?
Chè li tormenti, che tu porterai
Nel secol che t' è già tanto noioso,
Mi fan pensoso di paura forte ;
Ond' io chiamo la Morte,
Come soave e dolce mio riposo ;
E dico : ‘ Vieni a me, con tanto amore,
Ch' io sono astioso di chiunque muore.’ ”

so, inasmuch as one does not call this most gracious creature *his lady*, and the other does, as is manifestly apparent. And I gave the poem and the sonnet unto my friend, saying that I had made them only for him.

The poem begins, "Whatever while," and has two parts. In the first, that is, in the first stanza, this my dear friend, her kinsman, laments. In the second, I lament; that is, in the other stanza, which begins, "Forever." And thus it appears that in this poem two persons lament, of whom one laments as a brother, the other as a servant.

Whatever while the thought comes over me
That I may not again
Behold that lady whom I mourn for now,
About my heart my mind brings constantly
So much of extreme pain
That I say: "Soul of mine, why stayest thou?
Truly the anguish, Soul, that we must bow
Beneath, until we win out of this life,
Gives me full oft a fear that trembleth:
So that I call on Death
Even as on Sleep one calleth after strife,
Saying: 'Come unto me. Life showeth grim
And bare; and if one dies, I envy him.'"

E' si raccoglie negli miei sospiri
Un suono di pietate,
Che va chiamando Morte tuttavia.
A lei si volser tutti i miei desiri,
Quando la donna mia
Fu giunta dalla sua crudelitate :
Perchè il piacere della sua beltate
Partendo sè dalla nostra veduta,
Divenne spirital bellezza grande,
Che per lo cielo spande
Luce d' amor, che gli angeli saluta,
E lo intelletto loro alto e sottile
Face maravigliar ; tanto è gentile !



In quel giorno, nel quale si compiva l' anno, che questa donna era fatta de' cittadini di vita eterna, io mi sedeai in parte, nella quale ricordandomi di lei, disegnava un angelo sopra certe tavolette : e mentre io 'l disegnava, volsi gli occhi, e vidi lungo me uomini a' quali si convenia di fare onore. E' riguardavano quello ch' io facea ; e

For ever, among all my sighs which burn,
There is a piteous speech
That clamours upon Death continually :
Yea, unto him doth my whole spirit turn
Since first his hand did reach
My lady's life with most foul cruelty.
But from the height of woman's fairness, she,
Going up from us with the joy we had,
Grew perfectly and spiritually fair ;
That so she spreads even there
A light of Love which makes the Angels glad,
And even unto their subtle minds can bring
A certain awe of profound marvelling.



On that day which fulfilled the year since my lady had been made of the citizens of eternal life, remembering me of her as I sat alone, I betook myself to draw the resemblance of an angel upon certain tablets. And while I did thus, chancing to turn my head, I perceived that some were standing beside me to whom I should have given courteous welcome, and that they were observing what I did : also I

secondo che mi fu detto poi, egli erano stati già alquanto anzi che io me n' accorgessi. Quando li vidi, mi levai, e salutando loro dissi: "Altri era testè meco, e perciò pensava." Onde partiti costoro, ritornaimi alla mia opera, cioè del disegnare figure d' angeli: facendo ciò, mi venne un pensiero di dire parole per rima, quasi per annovale di lei, e scrivere a costoro, li quali erano venuti a me: e dissi allora questo sonetto, che comincia "Era venuta," lo quale ha due cominciamenti; e però lo dividerò secondo l' uno e l' altro.

Dico che secondo il primo, questo sonetto ha tre parti: nella prima dico, che questa donna era già nella mia memoria; nella seconda dico quello che Amore però mi facea; nella terza dico degli effetti d' Amore. La seconda comincia quivi: "Amor che;" la terza quivi: "Piangendo usciano." Questa parte si divide in due: nell' una dico che tutti i miei sospiri usciano parlando; nell' altra dico come alquanti diceano certe parole diverse dagli altri. La seconda comincia quivi: "Ma quelli." Per questo medesimo modo si divide secondo l' altro cominciamento, salvo che nella prima parte dico quando questa donna era così venuta nella mia mente, e ciò non dico nell' altro.

learned afterwards that they had been there a while before I perceived them. Perceiving whom, I arose for salutation, and said : "Another was with me." Afterwards, when they had left me, I set myself again to mine occupation, to wit, to the drawing figures of angels : in doing which, I conceived to write of this matter in rhyme, as for her anniversary, and to address my rhymes unto those who had just left me. It was then that I wrote the sonnet which saith, "That lady :" and as this sonnet hath two commencements, it behoveth me to divide it with both of them here.

I say that, according to the first, this sonnet has three parts. In the first, I say that this lady was then in my memory. In the second, I tell what Love therefore did with me. In the third, I speak of the effects of Love. The second begins here, "Love, knowing ;" the third here, "Forth went they." This part divides into two. In the one, I say that all my sighs issued speaking. In the other, I say how some spoke certain words different from the others. The second begins here, "And still." In this same manner is it divided with the other beginning, save that, in the first part, I tell when this lady had thus come into my mind, and this I say not in the other.

PRIMO COMINCIAMENTO.

Era venuta nella mente mia
La gentil donna, che per suo valore
Fu posta dall' altissimo Signore
Nel ciel dell' umiltate, ov' è Maria.

SECONDO COMINCIAMENTO.

Era venuta nella mente mia
Quella donna gentil, cui piange Amore,
Entro quel punto, che lo suo valore
Vi trasse a riguardar quel ch' io faciá.
Amor, che nella mente la sentia,
S' era svegliato nel distrutto core,
E diceva a' sospiri : “ Andate fuore ; ”
Per che ciascun dolente sen partia.
Piangendo usciano fuori del mio petto
Con una voce, che sovente mena
Le lagrime dogliose agli occhi tristi.
Ma quelli, che n' uscian con maggior pena,
Venien dicendo : “ O nobile intelletto,
Oggi fa l' anno che nel ciel salisti.”



FIRST COMMENCEMENT

That lady of all gentle memories
Had lighted on my soul ;—whose new abode
Lies now, as it was well ordain'd of God,
Among the poor in heart, where Mary is.

SECOND COMMENCEMENT.

That lady of all gentle memories
Had lighted on my soul ;—for whose sake flow'd
The tears of Love ; in whom the power abode
Which led you to observe while I did this.
Love, knowing that dear image to be his,
Woke up within the sick heart sorrow-bow'd,
Unto the sighs which are its weary load,
Saying, “Go forth.” And they went forth, I wis ;
Forth went they from my breast that throbb'd and
ached ;
With such a pang as oftentimes will bathe
Mine eyes with tears when I am left alone.
And still those sighs which drew the heaviest breath
Came whispering thus : “O noble intellect !
It is a year to-day that thou art gone.”



Poi per alquanto tempo, conciosfossecosa che io fossi in parte, nella quale mi ricordava del passato tempo, molto stava pensoso, e con dolorosi pensamenti tanto che mi faceano parere di fuori d' una vista di terribile sbigottimento. Ond' io, accorgendomi del mio travagliare, levai gli occhi per vedere s' altri me vedesse ; allora vidi una gentil donna giovane e bella molto, la quale da una finestra mi riguardava molto pietosamente quant' alla vista ; sì che tutta la pietade pareva in lei accolta. Onde, conciossiacosa che quando i miseri veggono di loro compassione altrui, più tosto si muovono a lagrimare, quasi come di sè stessi avendo pietade, io sentii allora li miei occhi cominciare a voler piangere ; e però, temendo di non mostrare la mia vile vita, mi partii dinanzi dagli occhi di questa gentile ; e dicea poi fra me medesimo : “E’ non può essere, che con quella pietosa donna non sia nobilissimo Amore.” E però proposi di dire un sonetto, nel quale io parlassi a lei, e conchiudessi in esso tutto ciò che narrato è in questa ragione. E però che questa ragione è assai manifesta, nol dividerò.

Videro gli occhi miei quanta pietate
Era apparita in la vostra figura,

Then, having sat for some space sorely in thought because of the time that was now past, I was so filled with dolorous imaginings that it became outwardly manifest in mine altered countenance. Whereupon, feeling this and being in dread lest any should have seen me, I lifted mine eyes to look; and then perceived a young and very beautiful lady, who was gazing upon me from a window with a gaze full of pity, so that the very sum of pity appeared gathered together in her. And seeing that unhappy persons, when they beget compassion in others, are then most moved unto weeping, as though they also felt pity for themselves, it came to pass that mine eyes began to be inclined unto tears. Wherefore, becoming fearful lest I should make manifest mine abject condition, I rose up, and went where I could not be seen of that lady; saying afterwards within myself: ✱ Certainly with her also must abide most noble Love. ✱ And with that, I resolved upon writing a sonnet, wherein, speaking unto her, I should say all that I have just said. And as this sonnet is very evident, I will not divide it. ✱

gentil

Mine eyes beheld the blessed pity spring
Into thy countenance immediately

Quando guardaste gli atti e la statura,
Ch' io faccia pel dolor molte fiate.
Allor m' accorsi che voi pensavate
La qualità della mia vita oscura,
Sì che mi giunse nello cor paura
Di dimostrar cogli occhi mia viltate.
E tolsimi dinanzi a voi, sentendo
Che si movean le lagrime dal core,
Ch' era sommosso dalla vostra vista.
Io dicea poscia nell' anima trista :
“ Ben è con quella donna quello Amore,
Lo qual mi face andar così piangendo ”



Avvenne poi che ovunque questa donna mi vedea, si facea d' una vista pietosa e d' un color pallido, quasi come d' amore : onde molte fiate mi ricordava della mia nobilissima donna, che di simile colore mi si mostrava. E certo molte volte non potendo lagrimare nè disfogare la mia tristizia, io andava per vedere questa pietosa donna, la quale pareva che tirasse le lagrime fuori delli miei occhi per la sua vista. E però mi

A while ago, when thou beheld'st in me
The sickness only hidden grief can bring ;
And then I knew thou wast considering
How abject and forlorn my life must be ;
And I became afraid that thou shouldst see
My weeping, and account it a base thing.
Therefore I went out from thee ; feeling how
The tears were straightway loosen'd at my heart
Beneath thine eyes' compassionate control.
And afterwards I said within my soul :
✱ "Lo ! with this lady dwells the counterpart
Of the same Love who holds me weeping now." ✱



It happened after this, that whensoever I was seen
of this lady, she became pale and of a piteous countenance,
as though it had been with love ; whereby she remembered me many times of my own most noble lady,
who was wont to be of a like paleness. And I know that often,
when I could not weep nor in any way give ease unto mine anguish,
I went to look upon this lady, who seemed to bring the tears into my eyes
by the mere sight of her. Of the which thing I

venne anche volontade di dire parole, parlando a lei ; e dissi questo sonetto, che comincia “Color d’ amore,” e ch’ è piano senza dividerlo, per la sua precedente ragione.

Color d’ amore, e di pietà sembianti,
Non preser mai così mirabilmente
Viso di donna, per veder sovente
Occhi gentili e dolorosi pianti,
Come lo vostro, qualora davanti
Vedetevi la mia labbia dolente ;
Sì che per voi mi vien cosa alla mente,
Ch’ io temo forte non lo cor si schianti.
Io non posso tener gli occhi distrutti
Che non riguardin voi spesse fiate,
Pel desiderio di pianger ch’ egli hanno :
E voi crescete sì lor volontate,
Che della voglia si consuman tutti ;
Ma lagrimar dinanzi a voi non sanno.



Io venni a tanto per la vista di questa donna, che li miei occhi si cominciaro a dilet-
tare troppo di vederla ; onde molte volte me

bethought me to speak unto her in rhyme, and then made this sonnet : which begins, "Love's pallor," and which is plain without being divided, by its exposition aforesaid.

Love's pallor and the semblance of deep ruth
Were never yet shown forth so perfectly
In any lady's face, chancing to see
Grief's miserable countenance uncouth,
As in thine, lady, they have sprung to soothe,
When in mine anguish thou hast look'd on me ;
Until sometimes it seems as if, through thee,
My heart might almost wander from its truth.
Yet so it is, I cannot hold mine eyes
From gazing very often upon thine
In the sore hope to shed those tears they keep ;
And at such time, thou mak'st the pent tears rise
Even to the brim, till the eyes waste and pine ;
Yet cannot they, while thou art present, weep.



At length, by the constant sight of this lady mine eyes began to be gladdened overmuch with her company ; through which thing many times I had much

ne crucciava, ed avevamene per vile assai ; e più volte bestemmiava la vanità degli occhi miei, e dicea loro nel mio pensiero : “ Or voi sollevate far piangere chi vedea la vostra dolorosa condizione, ed ora pare che vogliate dimenticarlo per questa donna che vi mira, e che non vi mira se non in quanto le pesa della gloriosa donna di cui pianger solete ; ma quanto far potete, fate ; chè io la vi rimembrerò molto spesso, maledetti occhi : chè mai, se non dopo la morte, non dovrebbero le vostre lagrime esser ristate.” E quando fra me medesimo così avea detto alli miei occhi, e li sospiri m’ assaliano grandissimi ed angosciosi. Ed acciò che questa battaglia, che io avea meco, non rimanesse saputa pur dal misero che la sentia, proposi di fare un sonetto, e di comprendere in esso questa orribile condizione, e dissi questo che comincia : “ L’ amaro lagrimar.”

Il sonetto ha due parti : nella prima parlo agli occhi miei sì come parlava lo mio core in me medesimo ; nella seconda rimovo alcuna dubitazione, manifestando chi è che così parla ; e questa parte comincia quivi : “ Così dice.” Potrebbe bene ancora ricevere più divisioni, ma sarebbe indarno, perchè è manifesto per la precedente ragione.

unrest, and rebuked myself as a base person : also, many times I cursed the unsteadfastness of mine eyes, and said to them inwardly : “ Was not your grievous condition of weeping wont one while to make others weep ? And will ye now forget this thing because a lady looketh upon you ? who so looketh merely in compassion of the grief ye then showed for your own blessed lady. But whatso ye can, that do ye, accursed eyes ! many a time will I make you remember it ! for never, till death dry you up, should ye make an end of your weeping.” And when I had spoken thus unto mine eyes, I was taken again with extreme and grievous sighing. And to the end that this inward strife which I had undergone might not be hidden from all saving the miserable wretch who endured it, I proposed to write a sonnet, and to comprehend in it this horrible condition. And I wrote this which begins “ The very bitter weeping.”

The sonnet has two parts. In the first, I speak to my eyes, as my heart spoke within myself. In the second, I remove a difficulty, showing who it is that speaks thus : and this part begins here, “ So far.” It well might receive other divisions also ; but this would be useless, since it is manifest by the preceding exposition.

“L’ amaro lagrimar che voi faceste,
Occhi miei, così lunga stagione,
Facea lagrimar l’ altre persone
Della pietate, come voi vedeste.
Ora mi par che voi l’ obliereste,
S’ io fossi dal mio lato sì fellone,
Ch’ io non ven disturbassi ogni cagione,
Membrandovi colei, cui voi piangeste.
La vostra vanità mi fa pensare,
E spaventami sì, ch’ io temo forte
Del viso d’ una donna che vi mira.
Voi non dovrete mai, se non per morte,
La nostra donna, ch’ è morta, obliare ;”
Così dice il mio core, e poi sospira.



Recommi la vista di questa donna in sì
nova condizione, che molte volte ne pensava
come di persona che troppo mi piacesse; e pen-
sava di lei così ✱ “Questa è una donna gentile,
bella, giovane e savia, ed apparita forse per volontà
d’ Amore, acciò che la mia vita si riposi.” ✱ E
molte volte pensava più amorosamente, tanto che il

“The very bitter weeping that ye made
So long a time together, eyes of mine,
Was wont to make the tears of pity shine
In other eyes full oft, as I have said.
But now this thing were scarce rememberèd
If I, on my part, foully would combine
With you, and not recall each ancient sign
Of grief, and her for whom your tears were shed.
It is your fickleness that doth betray
My mind to fears, and makes me tremble thus
What while a lady greets me with her eyes.
Except by death, we must not any way
Forget our lady who is gone from us.”
So far doth my heart utter, and then sighs.



The sight of this lady brought me into so unwonted a condition that I often thought of her as of one too dear unto me ; and I began to consider her thus : “This lady is young, beautiful, gentle, and wise : perchance it was Love himself who set her in my path, that so my life might find peace.” And there were times when I thought yet more fondly, until my

core consentiva in lui, cioè nel suo ragionare. E quando avea consentito ciò, io mi ripensava sì come dalla ragione mosso, e dicea fra me medesimo: “Deh, che pensiero è questo, che in così vile modo mi vuol consolare, e non mi lascia quasi altro pensare!” Poi si rilevava un altro pensiero, e dicea: “Or che tu se’ stato in tanta tribulazione d’ Amore, perchè non vuoi tu ritrarti da tanta amaritudine? Tu vedi che questo è uno spiramento, che ne reca li desiri d’ Amore dinanzi, ed è mosso da così gentil parte, com’ è quella degli occhi della donna, che tanto pietosa ti s’ è mostrata.” Ond’ io avendo così più volte combattuto in me medesimo, ancora ne volli dire alquante parole; e però che la battaglia de’ pensieri vinceano coloro che per lei parlavano, mi parve che si convenisse di parlare a lei; e dissi questo sonetto, il quale comincia: “Gentil pensiero;” e dissi “gentile” in quanto ragionava di gentil donna, che per altro era vilissimo.

In questo sonetto fo due parti di me, secondo che li miei pensieri erano in due divisi. L’ una parte

heart consented unto its reasoning. But when it had so consented, my thought would often turn round upon me, as moved by reason, and cause me to say within myself: "What hope is this which would console me after so base a fashion, and which hath taken the place of all other imagining?" Also there was another voice within me, that said: "And wilt thou, having suffered so much tribulation through Love, not escape while yet thou mayest from so much bitterness? Thou must surely know that this thought carries with it the desire of Love, and drew its life from the gentle eyes of that lady who vouchsafed thee so much pity." Wherefore I, having striven sorely and very often with myself, bethought me to say somewhat thereof in rhyme. And seeing that in the battle of doubts, the victory most often remained with such as inclined towards the lady of whom I speak, it seemed to me that I should address this sonnet unto her: in the first line whereof, I call that thought which spake of her a gentle thought, only because it spoke of one who was gentle; being of itself most vile.

In this sonnet I make myself into two, according as my thoughts were divided one from the other. The one part I

chiamo “Cuore,” cioè l’ appetito ; l’ altra “Anima,” cioè la ragione ; e dico come l’ uno dice all’ altro. E che degno sia chiamare l’ appetito cuore, e la ragione anima assai è manifesto a coloro, a cui mi piace che ciò sia aperto. Vero è che nel precedente sonetto io fo la parte del cuore contro a quella degli occhi, e ciò pare contrario di quel ch’ io dico nel presente ; e però dico, che anche ivi il cuore intendo per l’ appetito, però che maggior desiderio era il mio ancora di ricordarmi della gentilissima donna mia, che di vedere costei, avvegna che alcuno appetito ne avessi già, ma leggier pareva : onde appare che l’ uno detto non è contrario all’ altro. Questo sonetto ha tre parti : nella prima comincio a dire a questa donna come lo mio desiderio si volge tutto verso lei ; nella seconda dico come l’ anima, cioè la ragione, dice al cuore, cioè all’ appetito ; nella terza dico come le risponde. La seconda comincia quivi : “ L’ anima dice ; ” la terza quivi : “ Ei le risponde.”

Gentil pensiero, che parla di vui,
Sen viene a dimorar meco sovente,
E ragiona d’ amor sì dolcemente,
Che face consentir lo core in lui.
L’ anima dice al cor : “ Chi è costui,
Che viene a consolar la nostra mente ;

call Heart, that is, appetite; the other, Soul, that is, reason; and I tell what one saith to the other. And that it is fitting to call the appetite Heart, and the reason Soul, is manifest enough to them to whom I wish this to be open. True it is that, in the preceding sonnet, I take the part of the Heart against the Eyes; and that appears contrary to what I say in the present; and therefore I say that, there also, by the Heart I mean appetite, because yet greater was my desire to remember my most gentle lady than to see this other, although indeed I had some appetite towards her, but it appeared slight: wherefore it appears that the one statement is not contrary to the other. This sonnet has three parts. In the first, I begin to say to this lady how my desires turn all towards her. In the second, I say how the Soul, that is, the reason, speaks to the Heart, that is, to the appetite. In the third, I say how the latter answers. The second begins here, "And what is this?" the third here, "And the heart answers."

A gentle thought there is will often start,
Within my secret self, to speech of thee;
Also of Love it speaks so tenderly
That much in me consents and takes its part.
"And what is this," the soul saith to the heart,
"That cometh thus to comfort thee and me,

Ed è la sua virtù tanto possente,
Ch' altro pensier non lascia star con nui ?”
Ei le risponde : “ O anima pensosa,
Questi è uno spiritel nuovo d' Amore,
Che reca innanzi a me li suoi desiri :
E la sua vita, e tutto il suo valore,
Mosse dagli occhi di quella pietosa,
Che si turbava de' nostri martiri.”



Contra questo avversario della ragione si levò un dì, quasi nell' ora di nona, una forte immaginazione in me ; che mi pareva vedere questa gloriosa Beatrice con quelle vestimenta sanguigne, colle quali apparve prima agli occhi miei ; e pareami giovane in simile etade a quella, in che prima la vidi. ✱ Allora incominciai a pensare di lei ; e secondo l' ordine del tempo passato, ricordandomene, lo mio core incominciò dolorosamente a pentirsi del desiderio, a cui così vilmente s' avea lasciato possedere alquanti dì contro alla costanza della ragione : ✱ e discacciato questo cotal malvagio desiderio,

And thence where it would dwell, thus potently
Can drive all other thoughts by its strange art ?”
And the heart answers : “ Be no more at strife
’Twixt doubt and doubt : this is Love’s messenger
And speaketh but his words, from him received ;
And all the strength it owns and all the life
It draweth from the gentle eyes of her
Who, looking on our grief, hath often grieved.” ★

*Dante's
love is
gentle*



But against this adversary of reason, there rose up in me on a certain day, about the ninth hour, a strong visible phantasy, wherein I seemed to behold the most gracious Beatrice, habited in that crimson raiment which she had worn when I had first beheld her ; also she appeared to me of the same tender age as then. Whereupon I fell into a deep thought of her : and my memory ran back according to the order of time, unto all those matters in the which she had borne a part ; and my heart began painfully to repent of the desire by which it had so basely let itself be possessed during so many days, contrary to the constancy of reason. And then, this evil desire being quite gone from me,

si rivolsero tutti i miei pensamenti alla loro gentilissima Beatrice. E dico che d' allora innanzi cominciai a pensare di lei sì con tutto il vergognoso cuore, che li sospiri manifestavano ciò molte volte; però che quasi tutti diceano nel loro uscire quello che nel cuore si ragionava, cioè lo nome di quella gentilissima, e come si partio da noi. E molte volte avvenia che tanto dolore avea in sè alcuno pensiero, che io dimenticava lui, e là dov' io era. Per questo raccendimento di sospiri si raccese lo sollevato lagrimare in guisa, che li miei occhi pareano due cose, che desiderassero pur di piangere: e spesso avvenia che, per lo lungo continuare del pianto, dintorno loro si facea un colore purpureo, quale apparir suole per alcuno martirio ch' altri riceva: onde appare che della loro vanità furono degnamente guiderdonati, sì che da indi innanzi non poterono mirare persona che li guardasse sì che loro potesse trarre a simile intendimento. Onde io volendo che cotal desiderio malvagio e vana tentazione paressero distrutti sì che alcuno dubbio non potessero indurre le rimate parole, ch' io avea dette dinnanzi, proposi di fare un sonetto, nel quale io comprendessi la sentenza di questa ragione. E dissi allora: "Lasso! per forza" etc.

all my thoughts turned again unto their excellent Beatrice. And I say most truly that from that hour I thought constantly of her with the whole humbled and ashamed heart ; the which became often manifest in sighs, that had among them the name of that most gracious creature, and how she departed from us. Also it would come to pass very often, through the bitter anguish of some one thought, that I forgot both it, and myself, and where I was. By this increase of sighs, my weeping, which before had been somewhat lessened, increased in like manner ; so that mine eyes seemed to long only for tears and to cherish them, and came at last to be circled about with red as though they had suffered martyrdom ; neither were they able to look again upon the beauty of any face that might again bring them to shame and evil ; from which things it will appear that they were fitly guerdoned for their unsteadfastness. Wherefore I, (wishing that mine abandonment of all such evil desires and vain temptations should be certified and made manifest, beyond all doubts which might have been suggested by the rhymes aforewritten,) proposed to write a sonnet, wherein I should express this purport. And I then wrote, "Woe's me !"

Dissi “lasso,” in quanto mi vergognava di ciò che li miei occhi aveano così vaneggiato. Questo sonetto non divido, però che è assai manifesta la sua ragione.

Lasso ! per forza de' molti sospiri,
Che nascon de' pensier che son nel core,
Gli occhi son vinti, e non hanno valore
Di riguardar persona che gli miri.
E fatti son, che paion due desiri
Di lagrimare e di mostrar dolore,
E spesse volte piangon sì, ch' Amore
Gli cerchia di corona di martiri.
Questi pensieri, e li sospir ch' io gitto,
Diventano nel cor sì angosciosi,
Ch' Amor vi tramortisce, sì glien duole ;
Però ch' egli hanno in sè li dolorosi
Quel dolce nome di madonna scritto,
E della morte sua molte parole.



Dopo questa tribolazione avvenne, in quel tempo che molta gente andava per vedere quella imagine benedetta, la quale Gesù Cristo

I said, "Woe's me!" because I was ashamed of the trifling of mine eyes. This sonnet I do not divide, since its purport is manifest enough.

Woe's me ! by dint of all these sighs that come
Forth of my heart, its endless grief to prove,
Mine eyes are conquer'd, so that even to move
Their lids for greeting is grown troublesome.
They wept so long that now they are grief's home
And count their tears all laughter far above :
They wept till they are circled now by Love
With a red circle in sign of martyrdom.
These musings, and the sighs they bring from me,
Are grown at last so constant and so sore
That Love swoons in my spirit with faint breath;
Hearing in those sad sounds continually
The most sweet name that my dear lady bore,
With many grievous words touching her death.



About this time, it happened that a great number of persons undertook a pilgrimage, to the end that they might behold that blessed portraiture bequeathed

lasciò a noi per esempio della sua bellissima figura (la quale vede la mia donna gloriosamente), che alquanti peregrini passavano per una via, la quale è quasi in mezzo della cittade, ove nacque, vivette e morì la gentilissima donna, e andavano, secondo che mi parve, molto pensosi. Ond' io pensando a loro, dissi fra me medesimo: "Questi peregrini mi paiono di lontana parte, e non credo che anche udissero parlare di questa donna, e non ne sanno niente; anzi i loro pensieri sono d' altre cose che di questa qui; chè forse pensano delli loro amici lontani, li quali noi non conoscemo." Poi dicea fra me medesimo: "Io so che se questi fossero di propinquo paese, in alcuna vista parrebbero turbati, passando per lo mezzo della dolorosa cittade." Poi dicea fra me stesso: "S' io li potessi tenere alquanto, io pur gli farei piangere anzi ch' egli uscissero di questa cittade, però che io direi parole, che farebbero piangere chiunque le intendesse." Onde, passati costoro dalla mia veduta, proposi di fare un sonetto, nel quale manifestassi ciò ch' io avea detto fra me medesimo; ed acciò che più paresse pietoso, proposi di dire come se io avessi parlato loro; e dissi questo sonetto, lo quale comincia:

unto us by our Lord Jesus Christ as the image of His beautiful countenance, (upon which countenance my dear lady now looketh continually). And certain among these pilgrims, who seemed very thoughtful, passed by a path which is wellnigh in the midst of the city where my most gracious lady was born, and abode, and at last died. Then I, beholding them, said within myself : "These pilgrims seem to be come from very far ; and I think they cannot have heard speak of this lady, or know anything concerning her. Their thoughts are not of her, but of other things ; it may be, of their friends who are far distant, and whom we, in our turn, know not." And I went on to say : " I know that if they were of a country near unto us, they would in some wise seem disturbed, passing through this city which is so full of grief." And I said also : " If I could speak with them a space, I am certain that I should make them weep before they went forth of this city ; for those things that they would hear from me must needs beget weeping in any." And when the last of them had gone by me, I bethought me to write a sonnet, showing forth mine inward speech ; and that it might seem the more pitiful, I made as though I had spoken it indeed unto them. And I wrote this sonnet, which beginneth :

“Deh peregrini” ec. Dissi “peregrini,” secondo la larga significazione del vocabolo : chè peregrini si possono intendere in due modi, in uno largo ed in uno stretto. In largo, in quanto è peregrino chiunque è fuori della patria sua ; in modo stretto non s’ intende peregrino, se non chi va verso la casa di santo Jacopo, o riede : e però è da sapere, che in tre modi si chiamano propriamente le genti, che vanno al servizio dell’ Altissimo. Chiamansi “palmieri” in quanto vanno oltremare, là onde molte volte recano la palma ; chiamansi “peregrini” in quanto vanno alla casa di Galizia, però che la sepoltura di santo Jacopo, fu più lontana dalla sua patria, che d’ alcuno altro apostolo ; chiamansi “romei” in quanto vanno a Roma, là ove questi ch’ io chiamo peregrini andavano.

Questo sonetto non si divide, però ch’ assai il manifesta la sua ragione.

Deh peregrini, che pensosi andate
Forse di cosa che non v’ è presente,
Venite voi di sì lontana gente
Come alla vista voi ne dimostrate—
Che non piangete, quando voi passate

“Ye pilgrim-folk.” I made use of the word *pilgrim* for its general signification ; for “pilgrim” may be understood in two senses, one general, and one special. General, so far as any man may be called a pilgrim who leaveth the place of his birth ; whereas, more narrowly speaking, he is only a pilgrim who goeth towards or frowards the House of St. James. For there are three separate denominations proper unto those who undertake journeys to the glory of God. They are called Palmers who go beyond the seas eastward, whence often they bring palm-branches. And Pilgrims, as I have said, are they who journey unto the holy House of Gallicia ; seeing that no other apostle was buried so far from his birth-place as was the blessed Saint James. And there is a third sort who are called Romers ; in that they go whither these whom I have called pilgrims went : which is to say, unto Rome.

This sonnet is not divided, because its own words sufficiently declare it.

Ye pilgrim-folk, advancing pensively
As if in thought of distant things, I pray,
Is your own land indeed so far away
As by your aspect it would seem to be,—
That nothing of our grief comes over ye

Per lo suo mezzo la città dolente,
Come quelle persone, che neente
Par che intendesser la sua gravitate ?
Se voi restate, per volere udire,
Certo lo core ne' sospir mi dice,
Che lagrimando n' uscirete pui.
Ella ha perduta la sua Beatrice ;
E le parole, ch' uom di lei può dire,
Hanno virtù di far piangere altrui.



Poi mandaro due donne gentili a me, pregandomi che mandassi loro di queste mie parole rimate ; ond' io, pensando la loro nobiltà, proposi di mandar loro e di fare una cosa nuova, la quale io mandassi loro con esse, acciò che più onorevolmente adempiessi li loro prieghi. E dissi allora un sonetto, il quale narra il mio stato, e mandailo loro col precedente sonetto accompagnato, e con un altro che comincia “Venite

Though passing through the mournful town mid-
way ;

Like unto men that understand to-day

Nothing at all of her great misery ?

Yet if ye will but stay, whom I accost,

And listen to my words a little space,

At going ye shall mourn with a loud voice.

It is her Beatrice that she hath lost ;

Of whom the least word spoken holds such grace

That men weep hearing it, and have no choice.



A while after these things, two gentle ladies sent unto me, praying that I would bestow upon them certain of these my rhymes. And I, (taking into account their worthiness and consideration,) resolved that I would write also a new thing, and send it them together with those others, to the end that their wishes might be more honourably fulfilled. Therefore I made a sonnet, which narrates my condition, and which I caused to be conveyed to them, accompanied with the one preceding, and with that other which

a intender” ec. Il sonetto, il quale io feci allora, è
“Oltre la spera” ec.

Questo sonetto ha in sè cinque parti : nella prima dico là ove va il mio pensiero, nominandolo per nome di alcuno suo effetto ; nella seconda dico per che va lassù, e chi 'l fa così andare ; nella terza dico quello che vide, cioè una donna onorata. E chiamolo allora “spirito peregrino,” acciò che spiritualmente va lassù, e s'è come peregrino, lo quale è fuori della sua patria vista ; nella quarta dico com' egli la vede tale, cioè in tale qualità, ch' io non la posso intendere ; cioè a dire che il mio pensiero sale nella qualità di costei in grado che il mio intelletto nol può comprendere ; conciossiacosa che il nostro intelletto s' abbia a quelle benedette anime, come l' occhio nostro debole al sole : e ciò dice il Filosofo nel Secondo della Metafisica ; nella quinta dico che, avvegna che io non possa vedere là ove il pensiero mi trae, cioè alla sua mirabile qualità, almeno intendo questo, cioè che tal è il pensare della mia donna, perchè io sento spesso il suo nome nel mio pensiero. E nel fine di questa quinta parte dico “donne mie care,” a dare ad intendere che son donne coloro a cui parlo. La seconda parte incomincia : “Intelligenza nuova ;” la terza ; “Quand' egli è giunto ;” la quarta : “Vedela tal ;” la quinta : “So io ch' el parla.” Potrebbe più sottilmente ancora dividere,

begins, "Stay now with me and listen to my sighs."
And the new sonnet is, "Beyond the sphere."

This sonnet comprises five parts. In the first, I tell whither my thought goeth, naming the place by the name of one of its effects. In the second, I say wherefore it goeth up, and who makes it go thus. In the third, I tell what it saw, namely, a lady honoured. And I then call it a "Pilgrim Spirit," because it goes up spiritually, and like a pilgrim who is out of his known country. In the fourth, I say how the spirit sees her such (that is, in such quality) that I cannot understand her; that is to say, my thought rises into the quality of her in a degree that my intellect cannot comprehend, seeing that our intellect is, towards those blessed souls, like our eye weak against the sun; and this the Philosopher says in the Second of the Metaphysics. In the fifth, I say that, although I cannot see there whither my thought carries me—that is, to her admirable essence—I at least understand this, namely, that it is a thought of my lady, because I often hear her name therein. And at the end of this fifth part, I say, "Ladies mine," to show that they are ladies to whom I speak. The second part begins, "A new perception;" the third, "When it hath reached;" the fourth, "It sees her such;" the fifth, "And yet I know." It might be divided yet more nicely,

*e più fare intendere, ma puossi passare con questa
divisione, e però non mi trametto di più dividerlo.*

Oltre la spera, che più larga gira,
Passa il sospiro ch' esce del mio core :
Intelligenza nuova, che l' Amore
Piangendo mette in lui, pur su lo tira.
Quand' egli è giunto là, dov' el desira,
Vede una donna, che riceve onore,
E luce sì, che per lo suo splendore
Lo peregrino spirito la mira.
Vedela tal, che, quando il mi ridice,
Io non lo intendo, sì parla sottile
Al cor dolente, che lo fa parlare.
So io ch' el parla di quella gentile,
Però che spesso ricorda Beatrice,
Sì ch' io lo intendo ben, donne mie care.



Appresso a questo sonetto apparve a me una
mirabil visione, nella quale vidi cose, che mi
fecero proporre di non dir più di questa
benedetta, infino a tanto che io non potessi

*and made yet clearer ; but this division may pass, and
therefore I stay not to divide it further.*

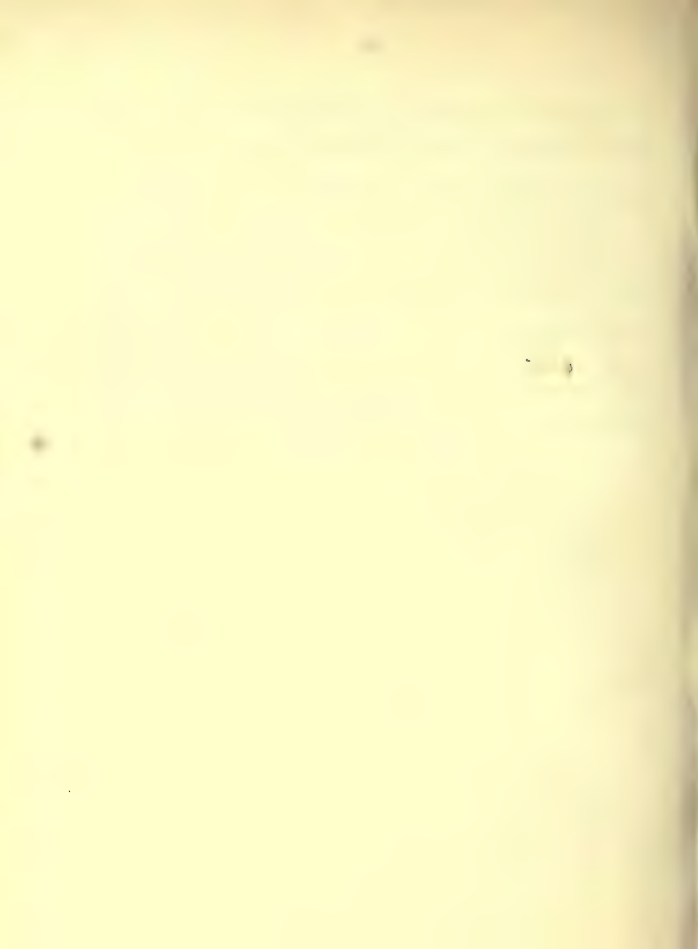
Beyond the sphere which spreads to widest space
Now soars the sigh that my heart sends above :
A new perception born of grieving Love
Guideth it upward the untrodden ways.
When it hath reach'd unto the end, and stays,
It sees a lady round whom splendours move
In homage ; till, by the great light thereof
Abash'd, the pilgrim spirit stands at gaze.
It sees her such, that when it tells me this
Which it hath seen, I understand it not,
It hath a speech so subtile and so fine.
And yet I know its voice within my thought
Often remembereth me of Beatrice :
So that I understand it, ladies mine.



After writing this sonnet, it was given unto me to
behold a very wonderful vision ; wherein I saw things
which determined me that I would say nothing further
of this most blessed one, until such time as I could

più degnamente trattare di lei. E di venire a ciò io studio quanto posso, sì com' ella sa veracemente. Sì che, se piacere sarà di Colui, per cui tutte le cose vivono, che la mia vita per alquanti anni duri, spero di dire di lei quello che mai non fu detto d' alcuna. E poi piaccia a Colui, ch' è Sire della cortesia, che la mia anima se ne possa gire a vedere la gloria della sua donna, cioè di quella benedetta Beatrice, che gloriosamente mira nella faccia di Colui, *qui est per omnia sæcula benedictus.*

discourse more worthily concerning her. And to this end I labour all I can ; as she well knoweth. Wherefore if it be His pleasure through whom is the life of all things, that my life continue with me a few years, it is my hope that I shall yet write concerning her what hath not before been written of any woman. After the which, may it seem good unto Him who is the Master of Grace, that my spirit should go hence to behold the glory of its lady ; to wit, of that blessed Beatrice who now gazeth continually on His countenance, who is blessed throughout all ages.



NOTES

p. 3, l. 3. "Here beginneth the New Life." Of this title Rossetti says: "The adjective *Nuovo*, *nuova*, or *Novello*, *novella*, literally *new*, is often used by Dante and other early writers in the sense of *young*. This has induced some editors of the *Vita Nuova* to explain the title as meaning *Early Life*. I should be glad on some accounts to adopt this supposition, as everything is a gain which increases clearness to the modern reader; but on consideration I think the more mystical interpretation of the words, as *New Life* (in reference to that revulsion of his being which Dante so minutely describes as having occurred simultaneously with his first sight of Beatrice), appears the primary one, and therefore the most necessary to be given in a translation. The probability may be that both were meant, but this I cannot convey."

This rendering of *New Life* is now almost universally adopted. It should be added that though we often find *nova età* = early life, no passage has yet been discovered in which *nova vita* has that meaning. On the other hand, this latter phrase occurs in one of the poems of Dante da Majano (that beginning *Giovane donna dentro al cor mi siede*) with the obvious meaning of *new life*: *Gli spiriti innamorati cui diletta Questa lor nova vita* ("the enamoured spirits, whom this new life of theirs delights"). The passage in *Purg.* xxx. 115, which is mostly quoted in favour of the "early life"

theory, should therefore most probably be used in support of the other rendering: *Questi fu tal nella sua vita nuova* = "this man was such in his new life" (*i. e.* in the new life into which love led him).

p. 3, l. 8 sqq. **Nine times already . . . eyes.* Dante first met Beatrice when he was nine years old: the heaven of light, *i. e.* the sun, had made nine revolutions round the earth since the poet's birth. He is of course following the Ptolemaic system of astronomy, then in general use. *

This figure *nine* recurs frequently throughout the *Vita Nuova*. (See below pp. 7, 9, 11, 21, 43, 145, 187.) Dante himself explains the mystic and symbolical meaning of the number on pp. 147, 149.

p. 3, l. 12 sqq. *even she . . . wherefore.* Though Rossetti rendered this difficult passage correctly from the first, it was not till he published the second edition of his book that he fully grasped its meaning. He always realized that the literal rendering of the words is: "The glorious lady of my mind who was called Beatrice by many who knew not how she was called." But somehow he went wrong in the interpretation till, in 1873, he found the solution which seems most acceptable to modern scholars: "May not the meaning be merely that any person looking on so noble and lovely a creation, without knowledge of her name, must have spontaneously called her Beatrice,—*i. e.* the giver of blessing? This would be analogous by antithesis to the translation I have adopted in my text "

p. 3, l. 13 sqq. *She has already been . . . agree.* In the *Convivio*, ll. 6, Dante says of the heaven of the sun that it "moves, following the movement of the starry sphere, from west to east one degree in a hundred years." Thus the twelfth part of a degree is eight years and four months; and this was the age of Beatrice at the time of her first meeting with Dante.

p. 5, l. 8 *sqq.* *The spirit of life . . . animate spirit . . . natural spirit* correspond to the *potentia vitalis*, *potentia animalis* and *potentia vegetitiva* (or *naturalis*) of the schoolmen. Hugh de St. Victor speaks of them as follows: "The *vital* power dwells within the heart, and whilst, in order to mitigate its heat, it inhales and exhales the air, it communicates life and wellbeing to the whole body; for, by means of the arteries, it drives the blood, vivified by the pure air, through the whole body, and by the movements of the blood physicians recognize the regular or deficient action of the heart.—The *animal* power has its seat in the brain, from which it imparts life to the four senses, and stimulates the organs of speech into expression as well as the limbs to motion. There are, in fact, three brain-chambers: a front chamber, from which all sensation, a back one, from which all motion, and a third and intermediate one, from which the whole reasoning faculties emanate.—The *natural* power prepares within the liver the blood and other juices, which spread by means of the veins throughout the whole body" (*De Anima*, II. 13; the passage translated by Sir Theodore Martin).

p. 7, l. 7 *sqq.* The ultimate reference is to the *Iliad*, xxiv 258 *sq.* :

οὐδὲ ἐφκει

Ἀνδρός γε θνητοῦ παῖς ἔμμεναι ἀλλὰ θεοῖο.

"He seems not the son of mortal man, but of God."

But Dante was almost certainly ignorant of Greek, and probably derived his knowledge of the passage from some Latin version of Aristotle's *Ethica Nicom.* VII. 1, where it is quoted; that he was acquainted with this particular book of the *Ethics* is proved by *Conv.* IV. 20.

p. 7, l. 21 * *nine years exactly.* This second meeting therefore took place on May Day, 1283. *

p. 9, l. 8. *Great Cycle*, eternal life.

p. 9, l. 21. *lord of terrible aspect*, Love.

p. 11, l. 10 *sqq.* Several of the commentators refer to the various legends of eaten hearts current in the Middle Ages, such as those connected with Guillem de Cabestanh and the Châtelain de Coucy; likewise to the *planh* on the death of Blacatz, in which Sordello urges the princes of Christendom to eat of the dead man's heart, so that they may gain courage and virtue. Of course it is possible that Dante may have derived his general conception from one or other of these cases; but there all resemblance ceases.

p. 11, l. 20 *sq.* It is clear that the vision took place during the fourth of the twelve hours of night; and that when Rossetti writes "third" in line 6 of the sonnet on p. 13 he is mistranslating *atterzate*. There Dante says that the hours were almost *divided* by three—that is, the *fourth* hour had not yet passed.

p. 15, l. 1 *sqq.* Of the "many answers" three are preserved, those of Cino da Pistoja, Dante da Majano and Guido Cavalcanti. They run as follows in Rossetti's version:

CINO DA PISTOJA

Each lover's longing leads him naturally
Unto his lady's heart his heart to show;
And this it is that Love would have thee know
By the strange vision which he sent to thee.
With thy heart, therefore, flaming outwardly,
In humble guise he fed thy lady so,
Who long had lain in slumber, from all woe
Folded within a mantle silently.
Also, in coming, Love might not repress
His joy, to yield thee thy desire achieved,
Whence heart should unto heart true service bring.

But understanding the great love-sickness
Which in thy lady's bosom was conceived,
He pitied her, and wept in vanishing.

DANTE DA MAJANO

Of that wherein thou art a questioner
Considering, I make answer briefly thus,
Good friend, in wit but little prosperous :
And from my words the truth thou shalt infer,—
So hearken to thy dream's interpreter.
If, sound of frame, thou soundly canst discuss
In reason,—then, to expel this overplus
Of vapours which hath made thy speech to err,
See that thou lave and purge thy stomach soon.
But if thou art afflicted with disease,
Know that I count it mere delirium.
Thus of my thought I write thee back the sum :
Nor my conclusions can be changed from these
Till to the leach thy water I have shown.

GUIDO CAVALCANTI

Upon my thinking, thou beheld'st all worth,
All joy, as much of good as man may know,
If thou wert in his power who here below
Is honour's righteous lord throughout this earth.
Where evil dies, even there he has his birth,
Whose justice out of pity's self doth grow.
Softly to sleeping persons he will go,
And, with no pain to them, their hearts draw forth
Thy heart he took, as knowing well, alas !
That Death had claimed thy lady for a prey :
In fear whereof, he fed her with thy heart.
But when he seemed in sorrow to depart,
Sweet was thy dream ; for by that sign, I say,
Surely the opposite shall come to pass.

Cino da Pistoja (1270-1336 or 1337) was not only one of the chief lyrical poets of his time, but a distinguished jurist as well, lecturing on law in several important cities. That he and Dante were great personal friends is proved by the fact that the latter usually speaks of himself in the *De Vulgari Eloquentia* as *amicus Cini*. Moreover, Dante addressed two sonnets to him (which are preserved, together with the replies), and Cino composed a beautiful canzone on the death of Beatrice, to console her lover (see below, note to p. 145, l. 3 sq.). Rossetti held that "of his claims as a poet it may be said that he filled creditably the interval which elapsed between the death of Dante and the full blaze of Petrarch's success."

Of Dante da Majano we know so little that his very existence was questioned by Borgognoni in 1882: however, Novati (1883) succeeded in proving beyond a doubt that there was such a person. "All the writers on early Italian poetry (says Rossetti) seem to agree in specially censuring this poet's rhymes as coarse and trivial in manner; nevertheless, they are sometimes distinguished by a careless force not to be despised, and even by snatches of real beauty." I, for my part, feel bound to agree rather with the general verdict: Dante da Majano was not merely coarse (as the present sonnet proves), but very unoriginal, imitating the Provençals even more slavishly than did the other early Italians.

To Guido Cavalcanti (c. 1253-1300) the *Vita Nuova* was dedicated (see p. 151, l. 2). Here and elsewhere (see pp. 119, 123, 151) Dante calls him the first of his friends; in the *De Vulgari Eloquentia* there are numerous references to Guido's poems; while the *Purgatorio* (xi. 97-99) contains the well-known passage—"One Guido hath taken from the other the glory of our tongue; and perchance one is born who shall chase both from the nest"—where the "one Guido" is generally interpreted as Guido Cavalcanti, "the other" as Guido Guinicelli, and the poet who is destined to surpass them both as Dante himself. Our Guido was the

son of the Cavalcante Cavalcanti and the son-in-law of the Farinata degli Uberti to whose fatherly love and to whose love of country, respectively, so splendid a memorial is set in the tenth canto of the *Inferno*. In politics he was a White Guelph; and it so happened that during Dante's Priorate, in 1300, the feud between this faction and the Blacks under Corso Donati became so violent that it was found necessary to banish the heads of the parties. Guido was sent to Sarzana, an unhealthy spot, where he soon sickened and died (in August, 1300). No episode in Dante's life reflects more surely his impartiality and stern sense of justice. Guido's claims as a lyric poet seem in some ways understated in the following estimate by Rossetti: "The stiffness and cold conceits which prevail in this poem (the canzone *Donna mi priega*) may be found disfiguring much of what Cavalcanti has left, while much besides is blunt, obscure and abrupt: nevertheless, if it need hardly be said how far he falls short of Dante in variety and personal directness, it may be admitted that he worked worthily at his side, and perhaps before him, in adding those qualities to Italian poetry. That Guido's poems dwelt in the mind of Dante is evident by his having appropriated lines from them . . . with little alteration, more than once, in the *Commedia*."

p. 17, l. 8 sq. *where words . . . glory, i. e. in a church.*

p. 19, l. 7. *divers rhymes.* The identification of such of these poems as do not appear in the *Vita Nuova* has much exercised the commentators. It seems clear, from a reading recently adopted, that the well-known sonnet, *Guido, vorrei che tu e Lapo ed io*, is one of the pieces in question (see Appendix I, No. 3). According to this theory, we must in line 9 substitute *Lagia* for *Bice*. Vanna would be Guido's mistress and Lagia the beloved of Lapo, while the lady who served as a screen would be the one who occurred thirtieth in the *sirventese* (unfortunately lost) to which Dante refers in line 10 of the *Guido, vorrei* sonnet, and more fully

a little further on in the present passage (p. 19, l. 16). The same screening lady seems to have inspired the canzone, *La dispietata mente che pur mira* (see Appendix I, No. 4).—The term *sirventese*, adopted from the Provençal *sirventes*, generally applied to poems of a non-amorous character.

p. 21, l. 14. *sonnet*. "It will be observed that this poem is not what we now call a sonnet. Its structure, however, is analogous to that of the sonnet, being two sextetts followed by two quatrains, instead of two quatrains followed by two triplets. Dante applies the term sonnet to both these forms of composition, and to no other" (Rossetti). The technical name of this sonnet form is *sonetto doppio*. Another instance occurs on pp. 27, 29.

p. 21, l. 15, *sqq.* *because understands*. If Dante, in writing this double sonnet, succeeded in putting his friends off the scent as completely as he has confused his editors, he may be said to have achieved his object to the full. I have never understood which portion refers to the screening lady, and which to Beatrice; nor do any of the suggested explanations satisfy me.

p. 23, l. 18 *sqq.* These lines are, of course, a paraphrase of *Lamentations*, l. 12 (quoted in Latin on p. 23, l. 20 *sqq.*).

p. 25, l. 13 *sqq.* *which thing. understands*. Opinions differ as to whether the reference is to the lines on p. 27, 5–10, or to those on p. 29, 11–14. Some editors (including Rossetti) think that the allusion is to both passages; but this seems very doubtful. On the whole there appear to be least objections to the second set of lines. Those who favour the earlier ones rely on p. 123, ll. 15, 16.

p. 31, l. 3. *thitherwaras*. Why attempt to locate this spot, and to identify the journey with some otherwise known episode of Dante's life? See, however, the note to p. 75, l. 3 *sqq.*

p. 39, l. 24 *sqq.* “*I am . . . not thus.*” Rossetti hazards the following explanation of this difficult passage as “a not unlikely one”: “Love is weeping on Dante’s account and not on his own. He says, ‘I am the centre of a circle (*Amor che muove il sole e le altre stelle*): therefore all lovable objects, whether in heaven or earth, or any part of the circle’s circumference, are equally near to me. Not so thou, who wilt one day lose Beatrice when she goes to heaven.’ The phrase would thus contain an intimation of the death of Beatrice, accounting for Dante being next told not to inquire the meaning of the speech,—‘Demand no more than may be useful to thee.’”—Todeschini interprets as follows, and his view has found much favour with modern Italian editors: “I am, says Love, the centre of the circle, the circumference of which is occupied by all lovers, and therefore the trials of all converge in me. Now I am troubled by the anxiety of Beatrice, who, eagerly responding to the warm and pure affection which she thought you cherished towards her, is grieved by your deceptions, by which she is led to believe that, setting her aside, you play at love now with this, now with that one.”—For my part I think we have no right to credit Beatrice with sentiments for which there is no support in the *Vita Nuova*, and which seem to miss entirely the spirit of the work; and for that reason I am inclined to support the interpretation of Witte, which is in the same direction, but does not go so far: “One single love sends forth its rays equally to all the parts of the circumference, that is, manifests itself equally in all the lover’s actions; but your actions have more than one centre.”

p. 43, l. 8. *music.* That music was regarded as an essential feature of Provençal lyrical poetry, is well known; and it seems probable that it was in very general use among the early Italians too. Thus it seems clear, even without the explanatory note of the *Anonimo*, that in *Purg.* ii. 112–114, Casella *sings* to Dante a setting of the latter’s canzone, *Amor che nella mente mi ragiona*.

p. 47, l. 4. leave her ; *sdonnei*, literally, "leave converse with a lady." The affirmative of the verb *donneare* is derived from Prov. *domneiar*, "serve a mistress."

p. 49, l. 2. *At a more difficult passage.* See below, p. 123, l. 6 *sqq.*, where Dante justifies his concrete use of apparently abstract matters.

p. 49, l. 19 *sq.* *Names are the consequents of things.* Foerster notes that this phrase frequently recurs in the disputes between the nominalists and realists.

p. 53, l. 18 *sq.* and p. 57, l. 10 *sqq.* *Who yet . . . life ; of a surety return.* "It is difficult not to connect Dante's agony at this wedding feast with our knowledge that in her twenty-first year Beatrice was wedded to Simone de' Bardi. That she herself was the bride on this occasion might seem out of the question from its not being in any way so stated ; but, on the other hand, Dante's silence throughout the *Vita Nuova* as regards her marriage (which must have brought deep sorrow even to his ideal love) is so startling, that we might almost be led to conceive in this passage the only intimation of it which he thought fit to give" (Rossetti). From this note it is clear that Rossetti (and he stands by no means alone) had not grasped the fact that marriage had no place in the love literature of the Provençals and of the early Italians, their imitators ; nearly all the women celebrated by these poets were married women ; but the circumstance of their marriage is rarely alluded to with a word. That was the convention ; and though Dante's love for Beatrice was, of course, anything rather than conventional, yet the poet's literary treatment of his passion follows conventional lines throughout. Any allusion to the marriage of his beloved would have been entirely out of the picture according to the views of the time, and would have come as a shock to all his listeners and readers. So that it is quite safe to assume that the nuptials described are *not* those of Beatrice ; and

that Dante's agony was caused solely by her contemptuous treatment of him, for which he was to be pitied, but for which, in the circumstances, she could not be blamed.

p. 59, l. 22. *instruments*, that is, the eyes. In view of Dante's words (*And this difficulty*, etc.), one hesitates to explain this passage at length. Besides, it seems clear enough.

p. 69, l. 12 sq. *Of another matter more noble than the foregoing*. These words, as well as the dialogue with the ladies on pp. 71, 73, will become clear if read together with the passage in the Preface, p. xiv, explaining the threefold division of the *Vita Nuova*.

p. 75, l. 3 sqq. Here again I do not see that it is part or an editor's duty to spoil the atmosphere of the narrative by elaborately attempting to define the "clear water," or anything else. Most people, whether rightly or wrongly, will think of the river here and on p. 31 as the Arno; while the "city" of p. 75, l. 17, is, of course, Florence.

p. 77, l. 1 sqq. *Ladies that have intelligence in love*. Readers of the *Purgatorio* will remember the dialogue between Buonagiunta of Lucca (a typical representative of the early conventional school of love poetry) and Dante, the leader of the school of the *dolce stil nuovo*: "But tell me if I see here him who invented the new rhymes beginning: *Ladies that have intelligence in Love?* And I to him: 'I am one who, when Love inspires me, take note, and go setting it forth after the fashion which he dictates within me.' 'Oh brother,' said he, 'now I see the knot which kept back the Notary [Jacopo da Lentini], and Guittone [d'Arezzo], and me, short of the sweet new style that I hear. Truly I see how your pens follow close after him who dictates [*i. e.* Love], which certainly befell not with ours. And he who sets himself to search farther, has lost all sense of difference between the one style and the other'; and, as if satisfied, he

was silent" (*Purg.* xxiv. 49-63).—The circumstance that Buonagiunta selects as an example of the *dolce stil nuovo* this poem with which begins the second and loftier portion of the *Vita Nuova*, is not without significance.

p. 79, l. 3 *sqq.* *There where . . . pray.* The "one" is, of course, Dante; but whether the two following lines should be taken as a forecast of the *Commedia*, or as an expression of the poet's sense of his own worthlessness as compared with the transcendent qualities of his mistress, is very difficult to decide. The former and more obvious interpretation is rejected by many critics on the ground that we cannot assume Dante to have conceived the *Commedia* as early as the period to which this poem would seem to belong (some time before the death of Beatrice). This rejection is of course based on the theory that Dante actually wrote all the poems of the *Vita Nuova* on the occasions and in the order specified by him. On the same principle we must interpret the words "who dreads the loss of her" not as a reference to the death of Beatrice, but merely as a trait in the poet's conception of her: for him she was a heavenly being, an angel, whose proper place was really never on earth, but who had been lent by God to the poor mortals below, so that they might grow in virtue and good deeds.—For my part I prefer the simpler explanation. Dante may very well have formed the plan of his great poem as a young man. There is no occasion to place this canzone earlier than 1292 (when it appears in a MS., though these particular lines happen to be missing). Beatrice died in 1290; so that there would be no inconsistency between this explanation and the passage on p. 203, and we could still adhere to the theory, which, indeed, no lover of Dante would care to give up, that the *Commedia* was inspired by the poet's passion for Beatrice. The only theory that *would* have to be given up is that according to which all the poems of the *Vita Nuova* were actually inspired and composed in the manner set forth by the poet in the prose passages. There can be no doubt that, as a general

rule, they were. But are we to concede nothing to poetic licence? And is it inconceivable that Dante may have written the present poem after the death of Beatrice, with the full intention of introducing it as though it belonged to the period preceding that catastrophe; feeling that the mystic and prophetic touches, which were mystic and prophetic to none but the reader, would add to the general effect and intensity of the piece?

p. 81, l. 11. *Smile*. Rossetti adopts the reading *riso* though the best MS. evidence is all in favour of *viso*. He and the editors who think with him, are supported both by the explanatory prose passage on p. 83, l. 13 *sqq.*, where the greeting of Beatrice is defined as "an act of her mouth," i.e. a smile [cf. *Inf.* v. 133 *sq.* "When we read how the fond smile was kissed by such a lover"]; and by the lines in the canzone beginning, *Amor che nella mente mi ragiona*: "Things are revealed in her aspect which shows us of the joys of Paradise, I mean in her eyes and in her sweet smile, which Love assigneth there as to their proper place." The sonnet and prose passage on pp. 91, 93, on the whole seem to favour the same interpretation.

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p. 85, l. 15. *above written*. The reference is to passages like p. 35, l. 15 *sq.*; p. 37, l. 21 *sqq.*; p. 71, l. 22 *sqq.*

p. 87, l. 6. *What thing love is*. The nature of love formed one of the main themes of all the early Italian poets, from Pier della Vigna and Jacopo da Lentini down to Guinicelli, Cavalcanti and Dante. I reproduce the epoch-making canzone of Guido Guinicelli (*Al cor gentil ripara sempre Amore*), in the first place because it is perhaps the most important poem of the class; and secondly because there is a reference to it a few lines lower down (p. 87, l. 15 *sq.*), where the "wise man" is none other than Guido. Dante had the greatest admiration for his fore-runner, his numerous references to *quel nobile Guido Guinicelli, dominus Guido*

Guinicelli, maximus Guido, being topped by the splendid eulogy in *Purg.* xxvi, 97 *sqq.*, where he speaks of him as "the father of myself, and of others my betters, who ever used sweet and graceful rhymes of love."—Of this poet, whom Rossetti calls "certainly the greatest of his time," little is known. He was a member of the Ghibelline Principi family of Bologna, where he was born about the year 1230. He was *Podestà* of Castelfranco in 1270, and exiled from Bologna in 1274, together with the Lambertazzi and other Ghibellines. According to some authorities he died at Verona in 1276. His earlier poetry is in the manner of Guittone d'Arezzo; but he soon recognised its artificiality and convention (*cf.* *Purg.* xxvi. 124-126); and by uniting the best qualities of his predecessors to greater spontaneity and directness, and trusting to inspiration more than they had done, he became the founder of the Florentine school, and numbered Cavalcanti and Dante among his disciples.

The famous canzone runs as follows in Rossetti's version

Within the gentle heart Love shelters him
As birds within the green shade of the grove
Before the gentle heart, in nature's scheme,
Love was not, nor the gentle heart ere Love,
For with the sun, at once,
So sprang the light immediately; nor was
Its birth before the sun's.
And Love hath its effect in gentleness
Of very self; even as
Within the middle fire the heat's excess.

The fire of Love comes to the gentle heart
Like as its virtue to a precious stone;
To which no star its influence can impart
Till it is made a pure thing by the sun:
For when the sun hath smit
From out its essence that which there was vile,

The star endoweth it.
And so the heart created by God's breath,
Pure, true, and clean from guile,
A woman, like a star, enamoureth.

In gentle heart Love for like reason is [bow d :
For which the lamp's high flame is fanned and
Clear, piercing bright, it shines for its own bliss ;
Nor would it burn there else, it is so proud.
For evil natures meet
With Love as it were water met with fire,
As cold abhorring heat.
Through gentle heart Love doth a track divine,—
Like knowing like ; the same
As diamond runs through iron in the mine.

The sun strikes full upon the mud all day :
It remains vile, nor the sun's worth is less.
“ By race I am gentle,” the proud man doth say :
He is the mud, the sun is gentleness.
Let no man predicate
That aught the name of gentleness shall have,
Even in a king's estate,
Except the heart there be a gentle man's.
The star-beam lights the wave,—
Heaven holds the star and the star's radiance.

God, in the understanding of high Heaven,
Burns more than in our sight the living sun :
There to behold His Face unveiled is given ;
And Heaven, whose will is homage paid to One
Fulfils the things which live
In God, from the beginning excellent.
So should my lady give
That truth which in her eyes is glorified,
On which her heart is bent,
To me whose service waiteth at her side.

My lady, God shall ask, "What daredst thou?
 (When my soul stands with all her acts review'd;)
 "Thou passedst Heaven, into thy sight, as now,
 To make Me of vain love similitude.
 To Me doth praise belong,
 And to the Queen of all the realm of grace
 Who slayeth fraud and wrong."
 Then may I plead: "As though from Thee he came,
 Love wore an angel's face:
 Lord, if I loved her, count it not my shame."

In Appendix I, No. 8, will be found another sonnet of Dante's dealing with the nature of love, probably composed about the same time, and rejected in favour of the one on p. 87 *sq.*

p. 89, l. 13 *sqq.* *this subject . . . as form does matter.* The *subject* is the heart, the *power* is love. Love is the essence of the heart, makes the heart what it is; even as, in the language of the schoolmen, the *form* is the essence of any object (or *matter*).

p. 93, l. 22 and p. 95, l. 1 *sqq.* Those who, like the present editor, firmly believe in the identification of Dante's Beatrice with Beatrice Portinari, will be interested to learn something about her father, Folco. Most of the details concerning his life were first made known by Passerini in the *Storia degli stabilimenti di beneficenza ecc. della città di Firenze* (Florence, 1853, p. 284 *sqq.*). He married Cilia di Gherardo di Caponsacchi, who bore him not only Beatrice, but several sons (to one of whom there is evidently a reference on p. 159, l. 20, see note). He was a wealthy Ghibelline of Florence, who in 1282 became one of the fourteen *buonomini*, and later in the same year one of the Priors—an office he again held in 1283 and 1287. In 1285 he conceived the idea of founding a public hospital, the S. Maria Novella, which was completed in June, 1288, and is still standing. He died on Dec. 31, 1289, and was accorded a public funeral. In his

will he bequeathed to his daughter, Beatrice, the sum of fifty pounds (*Item, domine Bici filie meæ, et uxori Domini Simonis de Bardis, reliqui libr. 50, ad floren.*).

p. 95, l. 10 *sqq.* And because it is the usage . . . with women This custom, for which it would be easy to find parallels (so with the Jews to this day) is illustrated by Boccaccio in the *Decameron* (II. 8): "To the chief church was the dead body carried, to be generally seen of all the people, his mother and friends weeping heavily by it, as many more did the like beside, because he was beloved of every one. In which time of universal mourning, the honest man (in whose house he died) spake thus to his wife: 'Disguise thyself in some decent manner, and go to the church, where (as I hear) they have laid the body of Ieronimo. Crowd in amongst the women, as I will do the like amongst the men, to hear what opinion passeth of his death, and whether we shall be scandalised thereby, or no.'" (Anonymous translation, London, 1620.)

p. 97, l. 16. *Ana therefore I wrote two sonnets.* It seems highly probable that Dante wrote two further sonnets on the same theme, which will be found in Appendix I, Nos. 9 and 10.

p. 99, l. 17 *sq.* The reference is to the lines on p. 77, l. 11 *sqq.*: *But only will discourse . . . with any else.*

p. 103, l. 19 *sqq.* It has been suggested that this passage, based on p. 113, l. 22 *sqq.*, was inspired by *Revelation*, vi, 12-14.

p. 105, l. 3. *out of life*, literally, "out of *this* life" (the earthly, as opposed to the eternal).

p. 105, l. 8. *cloua*. Witte hints that this beautiful conception (based on the poetic version of p. 115, l. 10) may be derived from early Italian art.

p. 105, l. 10 *sq.* "Hosannah in the highest"—the words with which the Jews greeted Christ on his entry into Jerusalem (cf. *St. Matthew*, xxi, 9; *St. Mark*, xi, 10; *St. Luke*, xix, 38; and *St. John*, xii, 13).

p. 107, ll. 12 and 18. *a young and gentle lady . . . who indeed was of my very near kindred.* Perhaps, as some think, that sister of Dante's, who, as Boccaccio tells us (in the Commentary on *Inf.* viii. 1), was married to Leone Poggi.

p. 109, l. 20. *this poem.* It will be remembered that this is the *canzone*, which, according to Norton (see Preface, p. xiv), forms the centre of the work.

p. 119, l. 20 *sqq.* and p. 121. *a certain lady.* This is the Joan mentioned in the sonnet addressed by Dante to Guido Cavalcanti (see above, note to p. 19, l. 7, and Appendix I, No. 3). Though Guido, who was not distinguished for his faithfulness in matters of love, never mentions this lady by name (a compliment he pays to others) yet there can be no doubt that she existed. The nickname of "Spring" supplies Dante with an opportunity for a play upon words (to which Rossetti says, "I have given as near an equivalent as I could"); he was much addicted to this practice (see above, note to p. 3, l. 12 *sq.*, for another and a finer instance), as were his contemporaries and successors in Italy and elsewhere.—Here, in the prose passage, Dante sets forth a thought that struck him when the episode occurred (though of course it may not have struck him till later); which thought he omitted in the poem itself, because he believed that Guido's "heart still regarded the beauty of her that was called Spring." And indeed, assuming that Guido still loved his Giovanna, it was as well to omit the conceit that, even as John (*Giovanni*) preceded Christ, and spring (*primavera*) precedes summer, so Joan (*Giovanna* and *Primavera*) preceded Beatrice. Rossetti, too, held that Dante suppressed "from delicacy towards his friend, the words in which Love describes Joan as merely the forerunner of

Beatrice"; and with regard to the final words of the prose section that have just been quoted, he adds that perhaps "a reproach is gently conveyed to the fickle Guido Cavalcanti, who may already have transferred his homage (though Dante had not then learned it) from Joan to Mandetta."—It seems probable that Joan figures again in the sonnet that will be found in Appendix I, No. 11.

p. 121, l. 16 *sq.* *St. Matthew*, iii, 3; *St. Mark*, i, 1; *St. Luke*, iii, 4; *St. John*, i, 23.

pp. 123–133. This digression, which was promised on p. 49, ll. 1, 2, is full of interest to the student of things medieval, though it cannot be said to enhance the purely æsthetic beauty of the work (any more than the dissertation on the figure *nine* on pp. 147, 149). If separated from its side-issues, Dante's main argument is as follows: In the preceding section Love, though in reality an abstraction, has become personified and been given human attributes. Now, poets in the vulgar tongue may do this, seeing that the great poets of antiquity did it; only they must take care, as did their predecessors, that their personifications do not exceed the bounds of reason.

p. 125, l. 16. *philosophy*, literally, "the philosopher," *i.e.* Aristotle. Dante is here alluding to passages like the following in the *Metaphysics* (from the section corresponding to chapter ii of the "little first book") which is here quoted in the old Arabic-Latin version: *et etiam materia necesse est ut imaginetur in re mota* (freely translated: "and also we must conceive that there is matter [a body] in anything that moves").

p. 125, l. 20 *sq.* *faculties . . . unto man.* Cf. the Epistle to Can Grande, section 26: *si homo est, risibilis est*; and the *De Vulg. Eloq.*, i. 2: *solus homo habet commercium sermonis.*

p. 127, l. 16. *language of oco and the language of sì.* Dante,

in common with others of his age, several times distinguishes a language or dialect by the affirmative particle. Thus in *De Vulg. Elog.*, I. 8: "But a third idiom prevailed in all that part of Europe of them who speak it, some say in affirmation *oc*, others *oïl* and others *si*, namely, the Spaniards, the French and the Italians."—As a matter of fact, *oc* was the affirmative of the Provençals, who are intended both here and in our passage, as is clear from another place in the *De Vulg. Elog.* (II. 12): "The Spaniards have also used this line [of ten syllables], and I mean by Spaniards those who have written poetry in the vernacular of *oc*"; these words being followed by an example from the Provençal troubadour, Aimeric de Belenoi.

p. 127, l. 17 *sqq.* *We shall not fina . . . hundrea ana fifty years.* This is true of Italy, but not of Provence, unless Dante is referring only to the best period of the troubadours. However, it is quite possible that even if he knew the poems of the earliest troubadour, William IX, Count of Poitiers (and he may well have done so, in spite of *De Vulg. El.*, I. 10), he may have been ignorant of the fact that he lived from 1071–1127.

p. 127, l. 19 *sq.* *certain of a very mean sort.* Dante is obviously alluding to some of the earlier poets, such as those mentioned in *Purg.* xxiv. (the passage is quoted above, in the note to p. 77, l. 1 *sqq.*).

p. 127, l. 22. *the first was moved . . . was difficult.* This theory is almost certainly not correct; at any rate the earliest poems of Provence and Italy known to us are not love-songs. However, it is so beautiful that one likes to dally with it; and the case of the modern Provençal, Roumanille, who was led to write in his "vulgar tongue" rather than in French in order to be understood (not indeed by a mistress but) by his mother, shows that there is at least potential truth in what Dante wrote.

p. 127, l. 25 *sq.* *This thing is against such as rhyme concerning other matters than Love.* The *Commedia* affords practical proof that Dante's views on this point were considerably modified in the course of time. In the *De Vulg. Eloq.* (II. 2) we find his later theory, or rather the germs of it: "Wherefore these three things, namely, safety, love, and virtue, appear to be those capital matters which ought to be treated of supremely, I mean the things which are most important in respect of them, as prowess in arms, the fire of love, and the direction of the will. And if we duly consider, we shall find that the illustrious writers have written poetry in the vulgar tongue on these subjects exclusively: namely, Bertran de Born on Arms, Arnaut Daniel on Love, Giraut de Borneil on Righteousness, Cino of Pistoja on Love, his friend [*i.e.* Dante himself] on Righteousness. . . . I do not find, however, that any Italian has as yet written poetry on the subject of Arms. Having then arrived at this point, we know what are the proper subjects to be sung in the highest vernacular language" (tr. by Ferrers-Howell.)

p. 129, l. 10. *poets, i.e.* Latin poets, whose unrhymed metre is throughout this section contrasted with the rhymes of the "vulgar" poets.

p. 129, l. 24 *sqq.* The two passages from the *Æneid* run as follows in Mackail's version (the speaker in the second being Phœbus, who addresses the Trojans):

"'Æolus—for to thee hath the father of gods and king of men given the wind that lulls and that lifts the waves—a people mine enemy sails the Tyrrhene sea, carrying into Italy the conquered gods of their Ilion home. Rouse thy winds to fury, and overwhelm their sinking vessels, or drive them asunder and strew ocean with their bodies. Mine are twice seven nymphs of passing loveliness; her who of them all is most excellent in beauty, Deïopea, I will unite to thee in wedlock to be thine for ever; that for this thy service she may fulfil all her years at thy side, and make thee

father of a beautiful race.' Æolus thus returned: 'Thine, O queen, to search whereto thou hast desire; for me it is right to do thy bidding. From thee have I this poor kingdom, from thee my sceptre and Jove's grace; thou dost grant me to take my seat at the feasts of the gods, and makest me sovereign over clouds and storms.'" (*Æneid*, I., 65 *sqq.*)

"Stubborn race of Dardanus, the same hand that bore you by parentage of old shall receive you again on her bountiful breast. Seek out your ancient mother; hence shall the house of Æneas sway all regions, his children's children and they who shall be born of them.'" (III., 94 *sqq.*)

p. 131, l. 8 *sq.* *Lucan.* In this passage from the *Pharsalia* (I., 44 *sqq.*) the reading now adopted is *debet* instead of *debes*; which would spoil Dante's point. However, editors like Weber give *debes* as a variant, and with this reading we get the whole passage as follows: "To these destined wars, oh Cæsar, let the famine of Perusia and the struggles of Mutina be added, the fleets, too, which rugged Leucadia overwhelmed, and the servile wars beneath the burning Ætna; still, much dost thou, oh Rome, owe to the arms of thy citizens, since for thy sake these events have come to pass."

p. 131, l. 10 *sqq.* These words are from the *Art of Poetry* of Horace, 141 *sqq.*: "How much more to the purpose is he who attempts nothing improperly! 'Sing for me, my muse, the man who, after the time of the destruction of Troy, surveyed the manners and cities of many men.'" As Dante knew no Greek it is probably best to assume that he learnt from some commentator of Horace the fact that the lines quoted by him form the opening of the *Odyssey*.

p. 131, l. 14 *sqq.* Ovid's *Remedia Amoris* begins thus: "Love had read the title and the name of this treatise, when he said: 'War, I see, war is being meditated against me.'"

p. 133, l. 4 *sqq.* of whom . . . many. Though Dante had no doubt many poets in his eye, there seems to be a special jocular reference to Guido Cavalcanti, "the first of his friends," and Guido Orlandi. The former had written a poem in which he said that if it were not that death was a mere trifle to him, he would make Love weep for pity (*E se non fosse che'l morir m'è gioco, Farènc di pietà pianger Amore*); and at this sentiment Orlandi seems to be poking fun, when he wrote in a sonnet that "sincere love neither weeps nor laughs" (*ch' amor sincero non piange nè ride*).

p. 137, l. 2. *labbia* should rather be translated "countenance"—so, too, below, p. 159, l. 10 and p. 177, l. 10. Students of the *Commedia* are familiar with this use of the word—with Pluto's *enfiata labbia* (*Inf.* vii. 7); with Virgil's *miglior labbia* (*Inf.* xiv. 67) and *contenta labbia* (*Inf.* xix. 12); and with Forese Donati's *cambiata labbia* (*Purg.* xxiii. 47).

p. 143, l. 3 *sq.* *Lamentations of Jeremiah*, i. 1. See below, p. 149, l. 13 *sqq.*

p. 143, l. 8 *sqq.* *that she might be glorious . . . Beatrice*. In Dante's *Paradise* the position of Beatrice is just below the Virgin Mary, separated from her only by Eve (see *Par.* xxxii. 4-9). For the passage describing Dante's first sight of Beatrice in the *Empyrean*, see Appendix IV, 2.

p. 143, l. 11 *sq.* *Ana because haply . . . departure*. Here would belong the beautiful *canzone*, *Morte perch' io non truovo*, Rossetti's translation of which is in every way worthy of the original. But unfortunately it seems that we can no longer attribute it to Dante, and that it is rather an exquisite imitation of Dante by Jacopo Cecchi: so that I have, with the utmost reluctance, decided to exclude it from Appendix I.

p. 143, l. 14 *sqq.* *The first is . . . little book*. Can Dante mean that the "new life" which began with his love for Beatrice came to an end (temporarily, at least) with her death?

p. 143, l. 20 *sqq.* *it would still be . . . mine own praises.* Witte and Carducci admitted that they could make nothing of this passage; nor does it appear to me that any of the explanations that have been suggested since are at all satisfactory.—That it is wrong for a man to speak of himself under any circumstances (cf. p. 145, l. 2 *sq.*) was demonstrated by Dante in the *Conv.* i. 2; see too *Purg.* xxx. 55, 62, 63.

p. 145, l. 3 *sq.* *For the which reasons . . . than myself.* We have already seen (note to p. 15, l. 1 *sqq.*) that Cino da Pistoja wrote a *canzone* on the death of Beatrice; and the theory that Dante is here referring to that poem is decidedly attractive. Rossetti rendered it as follows:

Albeit my prayers have not so long delay'd,
 But craved for thee, ere this, that Pity and Love
 Which only bring our heavy life some rest;
 Yet is not now the time so much o'erstay'd
 But that these words of mine which tow'rds thee move
 Must find thee still with spirit dispossess'd,
 And say to thee: "In Heaven she now is bless'd
 Even as the blessed name men call'd her by;
 While thou dost ever cry,
 'Alas! the blessing of mine eyes is flown!'"
 Behold, these words set down
 Are needed still, for still thou sorrowest.
 Then hearken; I would yield advisedly
 Some comfort: Stay these sighs: give ear to me.

We know for certain that in this blind world
 Each man's subsistence is of grief and pain,
 Still trail'd by fortune through all bitterness:
 At last the flesh within a shroud is furl'd,
 And unto Heaven's rejoicing doth attain
 The joyful soul made free of earthly stress.
 Then wherefore sighs thy heart in abjectness
 Which for her triumph should exult aloud?

For He the Lord our God
Hath call'd her, hearkening what the Angel said,
To have Heaven perfected.
Each saint for a new thing beholds her face,
And she the face of our Redemption sees,
Discoursing with immortal substances.

Why now do pangs of torment clutch thy heart
Which with thy love should make thee overjoy'd,
As him whose intellect hath pass'd the skies ?
Behold, the spirits of thy life depart
Daily to Heaven with her, they so are buoy'd
With their desire, and Love so bids them rise.
O God ! and thou, a man whom God made wise,
To nurse a charge of care, and love the same !
I tell thee in His Name
From sin of sighing grief to hold thy breath,
Nor let thy heart to death,
Nor harbour death's resemblance in thine eyes.
God hath her with Himself eternally,
Yet she inhabits every hour with thee.

Be comforted, Love cries, be comforted !
Devotion pleads, Peace, for the love of God !
O yield thyself to prayers so full of grace ;
And make thee naked now of this dull weed
Which 'neath thy foot were better to be trod ;
For man through grief despairs and ends his days
How ever shouldst thou see the lovely face
If any desperate death should once be thine ?
From justice so condign
Withdraw thyself even now ; that in the end
Thy heart may not offend
Against thy soul, which in the holy place,
In Heaven, still hopes to see her and to be
Within her arms. Let this hope comfort thee

Look thou into the pleasure wherein dwells
 Thy lovely lady who is in Heaven crown'd,
 Who is herself thy hope in Heaven, the while
 To make thy memory hallow'd, she avails;
 Being a soul within the deep Heaven bound,
 A face on thy heart painted, to beguile
 Thy heart of grief which else should turn it vile.
 Even as she seem'd a wonder here below,
 On high she seemeth so,—
 Yea, better known, is there more wondrous yet.
 And even as she was met
 First by the angels with sweet song and smile,
 Thy spirit bears her back upon the wing,
 Which often in those ways is journeying.

Of thee she entertains the blessed throngs,
 And says to them: "While yet my body thrave
 On earth, I gat much honour which he gave,
 Commending me in his commended songs."
 Also she asks alway of God our Lord
 To give thee peace according to His word.

p. 145, l. 14 *sqq.* Dr. Moore was the first to clear up all the difficulties of this very difficult passage. Here are his conclusions in his own words: "It is admittedly Dante's object to find the number *nine* pervading the date of Beatrice's death in respect of the *day*, the *month*, and the *year*. The *year* presents no difficulty, '*secondo l' usanza nostra*,' since 1290 is the year in which the perfect number (ten) was nine times completed in that century. As to the *month*, he has recourse to the Calendar of Syria, in which, the first month 'Tisrin' corresponding to October, June would be the *ninth* month. Now this information Dante doubtless obtained from Alfraganus, *Elementa Astronomica*, ch. I, where it is stated that 'Tixryn' is the first month of the Syrian year, and also that it corresponds with October. [There is no possible doubt that Dante was habitually indebted to

Alfraganus for his astronomical acts, especially in the *Convito*, where more than once he definitely acknowledges his obligation to him.] Finally, that the *day* of Beatrice's death should be the *ninth* day, he has to appeal to another Calendar, that of Arabia. [For *Italia* on p. 144, l. 14 read *Arabia*. I was compelled to let *Italia* stand in the text, as Rossetti had adopted this reading. — *Editor*.] Now turning to the same chapter of Alfraganus, in the paragraph immediately preceding the last quoted, we read 'Auspiciantur enim Arabes diem quemque cum sua nocte, id est civilem, *ab eo momento quo sol occidit* . . . sed apud Romanos, etc., dies nocti praemittitur, et dies quisque civilis incipit *ab exortu solis*.' Here is clearly the key to Dante's reference to 'the use of Arabia,' and we perceive (what I believe has not been suspected before) that Beatrice really died on the evening of June 8, and not, as commonly supposed, on June 9, and that in order that Dante might still be able to call it June 9 he was obliged to have recourse to the Arabian system in which 'the evening and the morning' make up each day, and June 9 '*secondo l'usanza nostra*' began at sunset on June 8. Thus Dante has to appeal to three different calendars in order to secure the mystical number nine in the unpromising date June 8, 1290, Arabian for the day, Syrian for the month, Italian for the year." (*Studies in Dante*, II, pp. 123-124, Oxford, 1899; first communicated to the *Academy* of Dec. 1, 1894.)

p. 147, l. 6 sq. *According to Ptolemy . . . are nine.* See the arguments in *Conv.* II. 3, summed up in the words: "So that according to him [*i. e.* Ptolemy] and according to the tenets of astrology and philosophy . . . the moving heavens are nine."—Readers of the *Paradiso* know what splendid use Dante made of these nine heavens of the Moon, Mercury, Venus, the Sun, Mars, Jupiter and Saturn, of the Stellar Heaven and the *Primum Mobile*.

p. 149, l. 10 sq. *wrote unto the principal persons thereof.*—*Terra* as a synonym for *città* is found frequently in the *Commedia* and

in later writers (down to Tasso); so that Rossetti's rendering is perfectly justified, and many commentators agree with him. However, as Gaspari and others point out, it is curious that Dante should have gone out of his way to use the word *terra* immediately after *cittade*; and the letter may well have been addressed to the princes of the *earth* (much as the *Vita Nuova* contains poems addressed to the faithful ones of love, to the ladies and to the pilgrims)—not with the object of being actually perused by them, but rather in the way that scholastic exercises were addressed to persons more or less appropriate. The fact that the epistle was in Latin supports this theory: why should Dante have written to the principal people of his native town in Latin?

p. 151, l. 13 *sq.* *That this poem . . . its close.* To those who have grasped Dante's mode of thought, this little touch, which might at first sight appear affected, is full of beauty and significance.

p. 153, l. 21 *sqq.* *And because often . . . as women's are* Several poems contained in, or belonging to the period of, the *Vita Nuova* are addressed to the *donne*: see above, pp. 77, 91, 97, and Appendix I, Nos. 1, 7, 9, 10.

p. 159, l. 3. *New Birth.*—*secolo novo* is here used in the same way as *gran secolo* on p. 9, l. 8. Conversely, on p. 165, l. 19, *secolo*, by itself, means "this earthly life."

p. 159, l. 16. *Thy sisters* are of course the other poems addressed to Beatrice. This seems clear enough, but in the *Convivio*, where everything has to be explained, Dante thus justifies his use of the word: "I say, 'sister' by similitude, for as a woman begotten by the same begetter is called sister, so may a man call a work that is done by the same doer a sister; for our doing is in a kind of way begetting" (III. 9).

p. 159, l. 20 *sqq.* *of a friend . . . gracious creature.* It seems clear, especially in view of the express statement on

p. 165, l. 10 (*as a brother*) that this refers to one of the five brothers of Beatrice, of whose existence we learn in Folco Portinari's will (dated January 15, 1287) and elsewhere. In this document the two elder brothers, Manetto and Ricovero, are appointed to act as governors to the three younger ones, Pigello, Gherardo and Jacopo; and it seems natural to assume that Dante's friend was one of the two older men, as the others would be almost too young for the friendship of a man aged twenty-five or twenty-six.

p. 167, l. 14 sq. *on that day . . . life*. We have now reached June 8, 1291.

p. 167, l. 16 sqq. *I betook myself . . . tablets*. Readers of Browning will recall how he has based a poem—*One Word More*, on this angel drawn by Dante and a sonnet written by Raphael. It is not surprising to learn from Dante that he drew in his youth, for the *Commedia* contains a number of passages testifying to his love for and understanding of the fine arts.

pp. 173-187. *a young and very beautiful lady*. To readers of the *Vita Nuova* this whole episode of the *gentil donna* presents no difficulties: she was a girl whose beauty and sympathy for a time caused Dante to forget Beatrice. Unfortunately, the poet saw fit, at a later period of his life, to envelop her in a shroud of mystery and allegory, a proceeding which, in its turn, has given birth to a whole library of more or less valuable commentary. An effort will be made in Appendix II to set forth Dante's later views on this subject of the *gentil donna*; but it cannot be too strongly and too frequently impressed on readers of the *Vita Nuova* that these later views do not really concern them at all.

It may, however, be mentioned in this place that this lady is said (in *Conv.* II. 2, fully quoted in Appendix II) to have been first seen by Dante when "the star of Venus had twice already revolved in that circle of hers which makes her appear at even or at morn, according to the two divers

periods, since the passing away of that blessed Beatrice who liveth in heaven with the angels and on earth with my soul." Lubin has proved (in his *Dante e gli Astronomi Italiani*) that each of these periods must be taken as 583 days and odd hours; proved it "beyond all possibility of dispute," according to Mr. Wicksteed (*Convivio*, Appendix II), who is more learned than most scholars in Dante's astronomy. Accordingly the lady of the window does not make her appearance till well over three years after the death of Beatrice.

Every attempt to identify this lady leads to failure. However, I give the following note of Rossetti's, not because I believe in the identification with Gemma Donati, or indeed with any other woman we know of, but because the general axiom it contains is undoubtedly true: "Boccaccio tells us that Dante was married to Gemma Donati about a year after the death of Beatrice. Can Gemma then be the 'lady of the window,' his love for whom Dante so contemns? Such a passing conjecture (when considered together with the interpretation of this passage in Dante's later work, the *Convito*) would of course imply an admission of what I believe to lie at the heart of all true Dantesque commentary; that is, the existence always of the actual events even where the allegorical superstructure has been raised by Dante himself."

p. 175, l. 15 *sqq.* *whereby* . *paleness*. See p. 81, l. 2 *sq.*

p. 177, l. 12. *My heart . . . truth*. literally, "lest my heart be broken." Rossetti seems to have associated the idea of "split" with "torn from its allegiance."

p. 179. l. 3 *sqq.* *Was not . . . others weep*. See above, pp. 107, 109.

p. 185, l. 4. *to them to whom I wish this to be spoken*, to students of these distinctions, *i. e.* to students of philosophy.

p. 187, l. 10. *about the ninth hour* is a somewhat awkward translation of *nell' ora di nona*. Perhaps "the time of nones"

would be better. This would properly be 3 p.m.; but, as "nones" were actually said at 12 "by anticipation," the hour here indicated is *noon* (cf. *Purg.* xxvii. 4 and *Conv.* iv, 23). This practice accounts for the English word "noon"; the Spanish *siesta* ("[after-]noon sleep") is, strictly speaking, to a correcter term.

p. 187, l. 19, *sqq.* *ana my heart . . . of reason.* For the passage in the *Purgatorio* where Beatrice reproaches Dante with his forgetfulness of her, see Appendix III, No. 1. Note that she there (*Purg.* xxx. 134) makes mention of visions (*sogno*), such as the one described in the present section, as one of the means she employed to call him back to her.

alquanti di, rendered by Rossetti as "so many days," is a rather vague term. It seems quite likely that the "thirty months" of which Dante speaks in *Conv.* II. 13 (see Appendix II), when he is trying to identify the lady with Philosophy, represents the period of his infidelity to the memory of Beatrice.

30 not
phil

p. 189, l. 23. *rhymes aforewritten, i. e.* the four sonnets written in honour of the *donna gentile* (pp. 173, 177, 181 and 185).

p. 191, l. 18 *sqq.* *About this time . . . beautiful countenance.* Rossetti, who is very free in this passage, appears to follow the reading *in quel tempo che molta gente andava*, on which those commentators rely who think that a special pilgrimage is here referred to, namely, the huge concourse that was attracted to Rome by the Jubilee of the year 1300. However, this seems in many ways unsatisfactory. There would be a gap of from five to six years between the present section and the preceding one; and we would have to set the completion of the *Vita Nuova* far later in the poet's life than seems desirable. Besides, the best MSS. have *che molta gente va*: "After this sorrow, it happened, at that period when many people go to see the blessed image . . ."; and the reference would thus be to a particular

period of any year, and not to a particular year at all. The periods of the greatest concourse were January and Easter; and probably the latter is intended.

The image is of course the "Veronica" (*Vera icon*, or true image); that is (as Rossetti puts it) "the napkin with which a woman was said to have wiped our Saviour's face on his way to the cross, and which miraculously retained its likeness." In *Par.* xxxi. 103 *sqq.* Dante makes use of the Veronica in a simile to illustrate his rapture at the sight of St. Bernard: "As is he who perchance from Croatia cometh to look on our Veronica, and because of ancient fame is sated not, but saith in thought, so long as it be shown: 'My Lord Jesus Christ, true God, and was this, then, the fashion of thy semblance?'" . . .

p. 193, l. 5. *a path*, perhaps the street known as *dei Corso*, where the Portinari dwelt.

p. 195, l. 7. At the shrine of Santiago di Compostella in Galicia (Spain). In the *Paradiso* (xxv. 17 *sq.*), St. James is heralded with the words: "Look! look! behold the Baron for whose sake, down below, they seek Galicia."

p. 195, l. 16. *Romers*. The English verb "to roam" was modified in form owing to its association in the popular mind with Rome; originally, of course, it had nothing to do with that city, being connected with A.S. *aræman* and *romigan* = spread, stretch out (or over).

p. 197, l. 20. *that other*. See p. 161.

p. 199, l. 14 *sq.* In the first chapter of the second book of the *Metaphysics* (corresponding to what is now known as the "little first book," already quoted in the note to p. 125, l. 17) Aristotle says (according to the Arabic-Latin version): *E jus sit duobis modis: dignum est ut sit difficilis non propter res sed propter nos. Dispositio enim intellectus in anima apud illud quod est in natura valde manifestum: similis est dispositioni*

oculorum vespertilionis apud lucem solis (which, freely translated, runs: "And since this difficulty [*i. e.* of knowing the truth] is twofold, it is noteworthy that the difficulty is not in the object but with us. For the capacity of the intellect in the soul towards that which is quite manifest in nature is like the capacity of the eyes of a bat in the light of the sun").

p. 201, l. 3. *Beyona the sphere . . . space*, indicating the motionless Empyrean, which is beyond the Ninth Heaven, or *Primum Mobile*.

p. 201, l. 19. *which determined me . . . any woman*. The work indicated is of course the *Commedia*, in which Beatrice (Heavenly Wisdom) first directs Virgil (Earthly Wisdom) to save Dante from sin, by showing him the pains of Hell and Purgatory, and then herself guides him upwards, through the Earthly Purgatory and the heavens of Paradise, into the very presence of God. Every reader of the *Vita Nuova* may be trusted, if he has not already done so, to make a study of the *Commedia*; but (as indicated in the notes) I have decided to give in Appendix III those passages from the *Purgatorio* and *Paradiso* which appear to me to have special bearing on the *Vita Nuova*. For this purpose the version of Cary has been selected, which, being the most literary (rather than the most literal) extant, seemed to harmonise best with Rossetti's rendering of the *Vita Nuova*.

p. 203, l. 11. Some of the MSS. close with the word *Amen*.



APPENDIX I

POEMS FROM THE *Canzoniere* WHICH MAY BE TAKEN TO BELONG
TO THE PERIOD AND SUBJECT MATTER OF THE *Vita Nuova*

I

E' m' incresce di me sì malamente

[Seems to belong to the early days of Dante's passion]

I mourn my piteous state so painfully,
That the amount of grief
From pity and from suffering is the same
For now, alas! I feel with deep regret
That in my will's despite,
The breath of the last sigh is gathering
Within that heart, which the fair eyes did wound,
When Love, with his own hand disclosed their charms,
To bring me to the pass of my undoing.
Ah me! how calm and meek,
How soft and sweet toward me they were raised,
When they at first began
To cause my death, which now I so deplore,
Saying: Our beams are messengers of peace.

Peace to the heart we bring, to your delight,
Said once unto my eyes

Those of the lady kind and beautiful ;
But when they from their intellect had learned
That through the force of her
My mind was taken from me totally,
They turned and bore Love's banners far away ;
So that their pleasing show of victory
Hath never from that moment been beheld :
Hence hath my soul remained
In sorrow, who from them expected joy ;
And now she sees the heart,
At brink of death, to whom she was espoused,
And is compelled to part from it enamoured.

Enamoured and lamenting, takes her way,
Beyond the gates of life,
The soul disconsolate, whom Love expels :
In such affliction deep she leaves the world,
That ere she hence departs,
Her Maker with compassion hears her plaint.
At the heart's inmost core she makes a stand,
Together with the remnant of that life
Which is extinguished only by her flight :
There she complains of Love,
Who drives her from the confines of this world ;
And many a fond embrace
She gives the spirits, which weep unceasingly,
That their companion they are soon to lose.

The image of this lady hath a seat
Exalted in my mind,
On which Love placed her, for he was her guide
And all the ills she sees affect not her ;
But she more beauteous is
Than ever now, and happier seems her smile ;
Her fatal eyes she raises, and exclaims,
Calling to her who grieves she must depart

Begone, thou wretched one, away, begone :
This the beloved exclaimed,
Who wars against me thus as she is wont ;
But now my pain is less,
For all my feeling is far less acute,
And nearer is the ending of my woes.

The day on which this lady came to earth,
As it is found inscribed
In memory's record, which begins to fade,
My young and tender frame was made to feel
A passion then unknown,
So potent that it left me full of fear ;
For over all my faculties was thrown
A curb so sudden, that I fell to earth,
O'erpowered by a voice which struck the heart :
And, if the record errs not,
The master-spirit trembled with such force,
That it seemed sure that Death
Was come into the world to take it thence :
He who was cause of this laments it now.

When the great beauty I again beheld
Which makes me so lament,
Ye gentle ladies whom I have addressed,
That virtue which has most nobility,
In gazing with delight,
Perceived full well that its chief ill was born ;
And knew what the desire created was,
By admiration so intent and strong ;
So that in tears it to the others said :
There shall arrive, in place
Of one whom I have seen, the beauteous form
Which makes me fear even now ;
And over all of us shall mistress be,
Soon as her eyes their pleasure shall declare.

To you, O youthful ladies, have I sung,
Whose eyes with every beauty are adorned,
And who have thoughtful minds subdued by Love ;
To you then let my words
Be recommended wheresoe'er they are heard ;
And hear me now declare,
That I forgive that beauteous thing, my death,
Who is the cause, and pity ne'er hath shown.

Lyell

2

Deh nuvoletta che in ombra d'amore

[Seems to belong to the early days of Dante's passion]

O cloud-like phantom, that in Love's sweet shade
So suddenly before these eyes appeared,
Have pity on the heart which thou hast wounded ;
Which hopes in thee, and in desiring dies

Phantom divine, excelling human form,
Thou hast implanted in my mind a fire,
With thy discourse, which kills.
And then, by virtue of thy fervent spirit,
Thou hast created hope, which partly heals
Whene'er thou smil'st on me.
O heed not the presumption of my hope ;
But on the love which burns me turn thine eyes ;
For many a lady has been doomed to feel
Another's pain, by comfort too late given.

Lyell

Guido vorrei che tu e Lapo ed io

[See Note to p. 19, l. 7]

Guido, I wish that Lapo, thou and I
 Could be by spells conveyed, as it were now,
 Upon a barque, with all the winds that blow
 Across all seas at our good will to live.
 So no mischance nor temper of the sky
 Should mar our course with spite or cruel slip
 But we, observing old companionship,
 To be companions still should long thereby.
 And Lady Joan, and Lady Beatrice [*read Lagia*],
 And her the thirtieth on my roll, with us
 Should our good wizard set, o'er seas to move
 And not to talk of anything but love :
 And they three ever to be well at ease,
 As we should be, I think if this were thus.

Rossetti

La dispietata mente che pur mira

[See Note to p. 19, l. 7]

Remembrance, which un pitying turns the view
 Backward to times that are for ever gone,
 On one hand carries war into my heart ;
 On th' other hand, the fond desire, which draws
 My thoughts to the sweet country I have left,
 Oppresses it with all the force of love :
 Nor do I feel within it strength enough
 And courage to maintain a long defence,
 Gentle Madonna, if not helped by you :

If then you may think fit
Ever to try and save it by your aid,
O now be pleased to send your kind salute,
By which its virtue may be comforted.

Be pleased, O Lady mine, to fail me not,
In this the heart's distress which loves you so ;
For succour it expects from you alone.
The generous master never checks his steed
When by the servant called who needs relief ;
For his own honour he defends, not him.
And truly, my heart's grief afflicts me more
When I reflect, Madonna, that your form
Is there depicted by the hand of Love ;
An argument why you
Should deem it worthy of the greater care ;
For He, from whom all goodness must be learned,
Holds us more dear that we his image are.

If you, my sweetest hope should hesitate,
And still delay in granting my request,
Know, that expectance has the limit reached ;
For on the verge of death my powers stand :
And this you cannot doubt, who see me moved
To seek the very last resource of hope :
For man should every grievous burthen bear,
Even the load which presses to the death,
Rather than prove his greatest friend's true faith,
Not knowing what may chance.
And should an evil answer be returned,
Thing there is not that costs a man so dear ;
For death it hastens and embitters more.

You, lady, are the one whom most I love,
And who the boon most valued can confer,
And upon whom my hope rests most secure :
For only to serve you I covet life ;

And what may to your honour best conduce
I wish and ask ; all else to me gives pain :
'Tis yours to give me what none other dares ;
For " yes " and " no " hath Love placed in your hand,
Unfettered ; whence my service is my pride.
My confidence in you
From your humane and noble bearing springs ;
For he who sees you by your outward air
Well knows that pity hath her seat within.

Then let your kind salute at last go forth,
And come into the long expecting heart,
Whose wishes, gentle lady, you have heard :
But know, that at the entrance there is found
A portal strong, barred by the dart which Love
Hurled on the day when I was made his thrall :
Wherefore admission is denied to all
Except Love's messengers, who have the power
To open, by his will who keeps it closed :
Hence, in the war I wage,
This aid's arrival might be to my loss,
If unattended by the messengers
Of him, the lord whose pleasure I obey.

My Song, thy journey should be short and swift,
For well thou knowest how brief will be the time
That he who sends thee, if unhelped, can last.

Lyell

5

Dagli occhi della mia donna si muove

[Seems to reflect the state of mind depicted on pp. 61-63]

Forth from my lady's eyes there streams a light
So gentle, that wherever she appears

Things are beheld that may not be described ;
Such their sublimity and nature are.
And by their beams upon my heart is showered
Such fear as makes me tremble and exclaim :
Here will I never venture to return :
But soon are all my resolutions lost ;
And thither I return, again to fall ;
Giving new courage to the timorous eyes
That had already felt her powerful beams.
Alas ! when there arrived, my eyes are closed,
And the desire which leads them perisheth :
Hence let my state, O Love, engage thy care,
Lyel.

6

Per una ghirlandetta

[Seems to refer to some episode similar to that narrated in
the section on pp. 69-75]

A garland have I seen
So fair, that every flower
Will cause my sighs to flow.

Lady, I saw a garland borne by you,
Lovely as fairest flower ;
And blithely fluttering over it, beheld
A little angel of Love's gentle quire,
Who sung an artful lay,
Which said, who me beholds
Shall praise my sovereign lord.

Let me be found where tender floweret blooms,
Then will my sighs break forth,
Then shall I say, my lady fair and kind

Bears on her head the flowerets of my Sire ;
But to increase desire,
Soon shall my lady come
Crowned by the hand of Love.

Of flowers these new and trifling rhymes of mine
A ballad have composed ;
From them, to win a grace, they have ta'en a robe
That never to another hath been given :
Therefore let me entreat,
When ye shall sing the lay,
That ye will do it honour.

Lyell

7.

Io mi son pargoletta bella e nuova

[Sets forth the spiritual beauties of Beatrice and belongs to
the period covered by the second part of the *Vita Nuova*]

Ladies, behold a maiden fair and young ;
To you I come, to show you in myself
The beauties of the place where I have been.

In heaven I dwelt, and thither shall return,
To impart delight to others with my beams :
And he who sees me and is not enamoured
Shall never have intelligence of love ;
When Nature sought the grant of me from Him
Who willed that I should bear you company.

Each planet showers down upon mine eyes
Most bounteously its virtue and its light :
Beauties are mine the world has never seen,
For I obtained them in the realms above ;
And ever must their nature rest unknown,
Unless to the intelligence of him
In whom Love dwells to give to others bliss

These words were written on the gentle brow
Of a fair angel who appeared to us ;
Whence I, to save myself, gazed full on her,
And hazarded the losing of my life ;
For so severe a wound I then received
From one whom I beheld within her eyes,
That ever since I weep, nor peace have known.

Lyell

8

Molti volendo dir che fosse Amore

[See Note to p. 87, l. 7]

Many who fain would tell us what is Love
Have lavished store of words, but still have failed
To tell of him in terms approaching truth,
And to define the nature of his worth.
One hath described him as a mental flame,
Imagination's offspring, born of Thought ;
Others have said he was Desire, the child
Of Will, and born of Pleasure in the heart.
But I would say that Love no substance hath,
Nor is a thing corporeal having form ;
But rather is a passion in desiring ;
Pleasure from beauty springing, nature's gift ;
Such that the heart's wish every wish exceeds,
And all-sufficient while that pleasure lasts.

Lyell

9

Onae venite voi così pensose

[See Note to p. 97, l. 16]

Whence come you, all of you so sorrowful ?
An it may please you, speak for courtesy.
I fear for my dear lady's sake, lest she
Have made you to return thus fill'd with dule.

O gentle ladies, be not hard to school
In gentleness, but to some pause agree,
And something of my lady say to me,
For with a little my desire is full.
Howbeit it be a heavy thing to hear :
For love now utterly has thrust me forth,
With hand for ever lifted, striking fear.
See if I be not worn unto the earth :
Yea, and my spirit must fail from me here,
If, when you speak, your words are of no worth.
Rossetti

10

Voi donne che pietoso atto mostrate

[See Note to p. 97, l. 16]

“Ye ladies, walking past me piteous-eyed,
Who is the lady that lies prostrate here?
Can this be even she my heart holds dear?
Nay, if it be so, speak, and nothing hide.
Her very aspect seems itself beside,
And all her features of such alter’d cheer
That to my thinking they do not appear
Hers who makes others seem beatified.”
“If thou forget to know our lady thus,
Whom grief o’ercomes, we wonder in no wise,
For also the same thing befalleth us.
Yet if thou watch the movement of her eyes,
Of her thou shalt be straightway conscious,
O weep no more! thou art all wan with sighs.”
Rossetti

11

Di donne io vidi una gentile schiera

[See Note to p. 119, l. 20 sqq., etc.]

Last All Saint’s holy-day, even now gone by,
I met a gathering of damozels;

She that came first, as one doth who excels,
Had Love with her, bearing her company:
A flame burn'd forward through her steadfast eye,
As when in living fire a spirit dwells:
So, gazing with the boldness which prevails
O'er doubt, I saw an angel visibly.
As she pass'd on, she bow'd her mild approof
And salutation to all men of worth,
Lifting the soul to solemn thoughts aloof.
In Heaven itself that lady had her birth,
I think, and is with us for our behoof:
Blessed are they who meet her on the earth.

Rossetti

APPENDIX II

THE *Donna Gentile* OF THE *Vita Nuova* AND OF THE *Convivio*.

[See Note to pp. 173-187.]

IN the opening chapter of the *Convivio* Dante writes —(the translation used is that of Mr. P. H. Wicksteed): “The viands of this banquet will be served in fourteen fashions, that is to say fourteen odes, treating as well of love as of virtue, which without the present bread had the shadow of a certain obscurity, so that to many their beauty was more in favour than their excellence. But this bread, to wit the present exposition, will be the light which shall make apparent every line of their significance. And if in the present work (which is entitled, and which I wish to be, the *Banquet*) the handling be more virile than in the *New Life*, I do not intend thereby to throw a slight in any respect upon the latter, but rather to strengthen that by this; seeing that it conforms to reason that that should be fervid and impassioned, this temperate and virile. For a different thing is comely to say and to do at one age than another; wherefore certain ways are suitable and laudable at one age which are foul and blameworthy at another. . . . And in that I spoke before entrance on the prime of manhood, and in this when I had already passed the same. And inasmuch as my true purpose was other than the aforesaid odes outwardly display, I intend to set them forth by allegorical exposition after having discussed the literal story. So that the one account and the other will supply a relish to those who are invited to this feast. . . .” (l. 1)

Now, of the fourteen *canzoni* which were to be expounded in the *Convivio*, only three were actually treated—for the work is a fragment; and of these three we are concerned only with the first—*Voi che intendendo il terzo ciel movete*. This poem deals with the fresh love which, as described towards the end of the *Vita Nuova*, threatened for a time to oust the love of Beatrice from Dante's breast. The piece was rendered as follows by Lyell:

Ye who by intellect the third heaven move,
Give ear unto the reasoning in my heart,
Which none but you may hear, so strange it seems :
The heaven that obeys your influence,
Creatures who are all gentleness and love,
Hath drawn me to the state in which I am ;
Hence the discourse upon the life I prove,
It seems, should meetly be address'd to you ;
Therefore I pray you to attend to me.
I will unfold to you the heart's new cares
How the dejected soul within it weeps ;
And how a spirit against her reasoneth,
Which on the beams of your fair heart descends.

The joyless heart was wont to be sustain'd
In life by a sweet thought, which often bent
Its flight unto the footstool of your Sire ;
Where it beheld a lady glorified,
Of whom so sweetly it discoursed to me,
That the soul said, would I could follow her !
Now appears one which drives the thought away,
And rules me with such power, that it makes
The heart to tremble so as to be seen.
A lady this one makes me to regard,
And says, he who would see the bliss of heaven,
Let him intently view his lady's eyes,
Unless the painfulness of sighs he dread.

This rival spirit opposes and destroys
The humble thought, accusom'd to discourse
Of a bright angel who in heaven is crown'd.
The soul so mourns her loss that still she weeps,
And says, ah woe is me ! how flees away
The pitying thought that was my comforter !
Again, the troubled soul says of mine eyes,
What was the hour this lady look'd on them ?
And why believed they not my words of her ?
I said, full surely in that lady's eyes
Must dwell the power that such as me destroys ;
And it avail'd me not that I foresaw
They should not gaze on her, whence I am dead.

Thou art not dead, but in delusion strayest,
Poor soul, who so lamentest thy estate,
Exclaims a little gentle spirit of love ;
For this fair lady, who disquiets thee,
Has so transformed thy life, that thou hast fear
Of her, so spiritless thou art become,
Behold how piteous and how meek she is,
How courteous in her greatness and how sage ;
And think to call her mistress evermore :
For thou shalt see, if not by self deceived,
The beauty of such lofty miracles,
That thou wilt say, O Love, my sovereign true,
Behold thy handmaid ; do as pleaseth thee.

My Song, I do believe that there are few
Who will thy reasoning rightly understand,
To them so hard and dark is thy discourse.
Hence peradventure, if it come to pass
That thou shouldst find thyself with persons who
Appear unskill'd to comprehend thee well,
I pray thee then, my young and well beloved,
Be not discomfited, but say to them,
Take note at least how beautiful I am.

Before proceeding with his commentary, Dante says "it should be known that writings may be taken and should be expounded chiefly in four senses. The first is called the literal, and it is the one that extends no further than the letter as it stands; the second is called the allegorical, and is the one that hides itself under the mantle of these tales, and is a truth hidden under beauteous fashion" (II. 71) The third and fourth are the "moral" and the "anagogical," respectively, which we shall not require.

In the following chapter (II. 2) the literal exposition is begun: "To begin with, then, I say that the star of Venus had twice already revolved in that circle of hers which makes her appear at even or at morn, according to the two divers periods, since the passing away of that blessed Beatrice who liveth in heaven with the angels and on earth with my soul, when that gentle lady, of whom I made mention in the end of the *Vita Nuova*, first appeared to my eyes accompanied with love, and took some place in my mind. And, as is told by me in the aforesaid book, more of her gentleness than of my choice it came to pass that I consented to be hers; for she showed herself to be impassioned by so great pity for my widowed life that the spirits of my eyes became in supreme degree her friends. And when thus affected, they so wrought within me that my pleasure was content to put itself at the disposal of this image. But because love cometh not to birth and growth and perfect state in a moment, but needeth some certain time and nourishment of thoughts, especially where there be counter thoughts that impede it, it was necessary ere this new love became perfect that there should be much strife between the thought which nourished it and that which was counter to it, and which still held the citadel of my mind on behalf of that glorified Beatrice. Wherefore the one was constantly reinforced from behind. And the reinforcement from before increased day by day (which the other might not) a hindering me, in a certain sense, from

turning my face backwards. Wherefore it seemed to me so strange, and also so hard to endure, that I might not sustain it; and with a kind of cry (to excuse myself for the change wherein, methought, I showed lack of firmness) I directed my voice to that quarter whence came the victory of the new thought (and the same, being a celestial virtue, was most victorious), and I began to say,—

Ye who by intellect the third heaven move."

The complete literal commentary fills chapters 2-12, which must be left to the advanced student. It may, however, be noted in passing that Dante is led to speak at length on immortality, "for in such discourse will be a fair ending of my speech concerning that living Beatrice, in bliss, of whom I purpose to speak no further in this book;" and that he winds up the digression with the words: "and so I believe, so aver, and so am assured, of the passage after this life to another better life, where this lady liveth in glory" (II. 9.)

The allegorical interpretation, too, occupies a number of chapters; but the main argument is again contained in one of them (II. 13) which alone will be given here:

"Now that the literal meaning has been adequately explained, we are to proceed to the allegorical and true exposition. And therefore, beginning again from the beginning, I say that when I lost the first delight of my soul, whereof mention is made above, I was pierced by so great sorrow that no comfort availed me. Yet after a certain time my mind, which was casting about to heal itself, made proof (since neither my own consolation nor that of others availed) to fall back upon the manner which a certain disconsolate one had erst followed to console himself. And I set myself to read that book of Boethius, not known to many, wherein, a captive and an exile, he had consoled himself. And hearing further that Tully had

written another book wherein, treating *Of Friendship*, he had touched upon words of the consolation of Lelius, a man of highest excellence, on the death of Scipio his friend, I set myself to reading it. And although it was at first difficult for me to enter into their meaning, finally I entered as deeply into it as my command of Latin, and what little wit I had, enabled me to do; by which wit I already began to perceive many things as in a dream; as may be seen in the *Vita Nuova*. And as it is wont to chance that a man goeth in search of silver and beyond his purpose findeth gold, the which some hidden cause presents, not, I take it, without divine command; so I, who was seeking to console myself, found not only a cure for my tears, but words of authors, and of sciences, and of books, pondering upon which I judged that Philosophy, who was the lady of these authors, of these sciences, and of these books, was a thing supreme; and I conceived her after the fashion of a gentle lady, and I might not conceive her in any attitude save that of compassion; wherefore the sense for truth so loved to gaze upon her that I could scarce turn it away from her; and impelled by this imagination of her, I began to go where she was in very truth revealed, to wit, to the schools of the religious orders, and to the disputations of the philosophers; so that in a short time, I suppose some thirty months, I began to feel so much of her sweetness that the love of her expelled and destroyed every other thought. Wherefore, feeling myself raised from the thought of that first love even to the virtue of this, as though in amazement I opened my mouth in the utterance of the ode before us, expressing my state under the figure of other things; because rhyme in any vernacular was unworthy to speak in open terms of the lady of whom I was enamoured; nor were the hearers so well prepared as to have easily apprehended straightforward words; nor would they have given credence to the true meaning, as they did to the fictitious; and, accordingly, folk did, in fact, altogether believe that I had

been disposed to this love, which they did not believe of the other. I began therefore to say:

Ye who by intellect the third heaven move."

There seems no occasion to add anything to these passages: they may be allowed to speak for themselves.

APPENDIX III

I

THE MEETING OF DANTE AND BEATRICE IN THE EARTHLY PARADISE

Purgatorio, xxx, 22-45, xxxi, xxxii, 1-9.

I have beheld, ere now, at break of day,
The eastern clime all roseate, and the sky
Oppos'd, one deep and beautiful serene,
And the sun's face so shaded, and with mists
Attemper'd at his rising, that the eye
Long while endur'd the sight : thus in a cloud
Of flowers, that from those hands angelic rose,
And down, within and outside of the car,
Fell showering, in white veil with olive wreath'd,
A virgin in my view appear'd, beneath
Green mantle, rob'd in hue of living flame :
And o'er my spirit, that in former days
Within her presence had abode so long,
No shudd'ring terror crept. Mine eyes no more
Had knowledge of her ; yet there mov'd from her
A hidden virtue, at whose touch awak'd,
The power of ancient love was strong within me.
No sooner on my vision streaming, smote
The heav'nly influence, which, years past, and e'en
In childhood, thrill'd me, than towards Virgil I

Turn'd me to leftward, panting, like a babe,
 That flees for refuge to his mother's breast,
 If aught have terrified or work'd him woe :
 And would have cried : " There is no dram of blood,
 That doth not quiver in me. The old flame
 Throws out clear tokens of reviving fire ; "
 But Virgil had bereav'd us of himself,
 Virgil, my best-lov'd father ; Virgil, he
 To whom I gave me up for safety : nor,
 All, our prime mother lost, avail'd to save
 My undew'd cheeks from blur of soiling tears.
 " Dante, weep not, that Virgil leaves thee : nay,
 Weep thou not yet : behoves thee feel the edge
 Of other sword, and thou shalt weep for that. "
 As to the prow or stern, some admiral
 Paces the deck, inspiring his crew,
 When 'mid the sail-yards all hands ply aloof ;
 Thus on the left side of the car I saw
 (Turning me at the sound of mine own name,
 Which here I am compell'd to register)
 The virgin station'd, who before appear'd
 Veil'd in that festive shower angelical.
 Towards me, across the stream, she bent her eyes ;
 Though from her brow the veil descending, bound
 With foliage of Minerva, suffer'd not
 That I beheld her clearly ; then with act
 Full royal, still insulting o'er her thrall,
 Added, as one, who speaking keepeth back
 The bitterest saying, to conclude the speech :
 " Observe me well. I am, in sooth, I am
 Beatrice. What ! and hast thou deign'd at last
 Approach the mountain ? Knewest not, O man !
 Thy happiness is here ? " Down fell mine eyes
 On the clear fount, but there, myself espying,
 Recoil'd, and sought the greensward : such a weight
 Of shame was on my forehead. With a mien

Of that stern majesty, which doth surround
A mother's presence to her awe-struck child,
She look'd; a flavour of such bitterness
Was mingled in her pity. There her words
Brake off, and suddenly the angels sang :
" In thee, O gracious Lord, my hope hath been : "
But went no farther than, " Thou, Lord, hast set
My feet in ample room." As snow, that lies
Amidst the living rafters on the back
Of Italy congeal'd, when drifted high
And closely pil'd by rough Sclavonian blasts,
Breathe but the land whereon no shadow falls,
And straightway melting it distils away,
Like a fire-wasted taper: thus was I,
Without a sigh or tear, or ever these
Did sing, that with the chiming of heav'n's sphere,
Still in their warbling chime: but when the strain
Of dulcet symphony, express'd for me
Their soft compassion, more than could the words
" Virgin, why so consum'st him? " then the ice,
Congeal'd about my bosom, turn'd itself
To spirit and water, and with anguish forth
Gush'd through the lips and eyelids from the heart.
Upon the chariot's right edge still she stood,
Immovable, and thus address'd her words
To those bright semblances with pity touch'd :
" Ye, in th' eternal day your vigils keep,
So that nor night nor slumber, with close stealth,
Conveys from you a single step in all
The goings on of life: thence with more heed
I shape mine answer, for his ear intended,
Who there stands weeping, that the sorrow now
May equal the transgression. Not alone
Through operations of the mighty orbs,
That mark each seed to some predestin'd aim,
As with aspect or fortunate or ill

The constellations meet, but through benign
Largess of heav'nly graces, which rain down
From such a height as mocks our vision, this man
Was in the freshness of his being, such,
So gifted virtually, that in him
All better habits wond'rously had thriv'd.
The more of kindly strength is in the soil,
So much doth evil seed and lack of culture
Mar it the more, and make it run to wildness.
These looks sometime upheld him ; for I show'd
My youthful eyes, and led him by their light
In upright walking. Soon as I had reach'd
The threshold of my second age, and chang'd
My mortal for immortal, then he left me,
And gave himself to others. When from flesh
To spirit I had risen, and increase
Of beauty and of virtue circled me,
I was less dear to him, and valued less.
His steps were turn'd into deceitful ways,
Following false images of good, that make
No promise perfect. Nor avail'd me aught
To sue for inspirations, with the which
I, both in dreams of night, and otherwise,
Did call him back ; of them so little reck'd him,
Such depth he fell, that all device was short
Of his preserving, save that he should view
The children of perdition. To this end
I visited the purlieus of the dead :
And one, who hath conducted him thus high,
Receiv'd my supplications urg'd with weeping.
It were a breaking of God's high decree,
If Lethe should be past, and such food tasted
Without the cost of some repentant tear."

"O thou !" her words she thus without delay
Resuming, turn'd their point on me, to whom

'They but with lateral edge seem'd harsh before,
 " Say thou, who stand'st beyond the holy stream,
 If this be true. A charge so grievous needs
 Thine own avowal." On my faculty
 Such strange amazement hung, the voice expir'd
 Imperfect, ere its organs gave it birth.
 A little space refraining, then she spake :
 " What dost thou muse on ? Answer me. The wave
 On thy remembrances of evil yet
 Hath done no injury." A mingled sense
 Of fear and of confusion, from my lips
 Did such a " Yea " produce, as needed help
 Of vision to interpret. As when breaks
 In act to be discharg'd, a cross-bow bent
 Beyond its pitch, both nerve and bow o'erstretch'd,
 The flagging weapon feebly hits the mark ;
 Thus, tears and sighs forth gushing, did I burst
 Beneath the heavy load, and thus my voice
 Was slacken'd on its way. She straight began :
 " When my desire invited thee to love
 The good, which sets a bound to our aspirings,
 What bar of thwarting foss or linked chain
 Did meet thee, that thou so should'st quit the hope
 Of further progress, or what bait of ease
 Or promise of allurements led thee on
 Elsewhere, that thou elsewhere should'st rather wait ? "
 A bitter sigh I drew, then scarce found voice
 To answer, hardly to these sounds my lips
 Gave utterance, wailing : " Thy fair looks withdrawn,
 Things present, with deceitful pleasures, turn'd
 My steps aside." She answering spake : " Hadst thou
 Been silent, or denied what thou avow'st,
 Thou hadst not hid thy sin the more : such eye
 Observes it. But whene'er the sinner's cheek
 Breaks forth into the precious-streaming tears
 Of self-accusing, in our court the wheel

Of justice doth run counter to the edge.
 Howe'er, that thou may'st profit by thy shame
 For errors past, and that henceforth more strength
 May arm thee, when thou hear'st the Syren-voice,
 Lay thou aside the motive to this grief,
 And lend attentive ear, while I unfold
 How opposite a way my buried flesh
 Should have impelled thee. Never didst thou spy
 In art or nature aught so passing sweet,
 As were the limbs, that in their beauteous frame
 Enclos'd me, and are scatter'd now in dust.
 If sweetest thing thus fail'd thee with my death,
 What, afterward, of mortal should thy wish
 Have tempted? When thou first hadst felt the dart
 Of perishable things, in my departing
 For better realms, thy wing thou should'st have prun'd
 To follow me, and never stoop'd again
 To 'bide a second blow for a slight girl,
 Or other gaud as transient and as vain.
 The new and inexperienc'd bird awaits,
 Twice it may be, or thrice, the fowler's aim ;
 But in the sight of one whose plumes are full,
 In vain the net is spread, the arrow wing'd."
 I stood, as children silent and asham'd
 Stand, list'ning, with their eyes upon the earth,
 Acknowledging their fault and self-condemn'd.
 And she resum'd: "If, but to hear thus pains thee,
 Raise thou thy beard, and lo! what sight shall do!"
 With less reluctance yields a sturdy holm,
 Rent from its fibres by a blast, that blows
 From off the pole, or from Iarbas' land,
 Than I at her behest my visage rais'd:
 And thus the face denoting by the beard,
 I mark'd the secret sting her words convey'd.
 No sooner lifted I mine aspect up,
 Than downward sunk that vision I beheld

Of goodly creatures vanish ; and mine eyes
Yet unassur'd and wavering, bent their light
On Beatrice. Towards the animal,
Who joins two natures in one form, she turn'd,
And, even under shadow of her veil,
And parted by the verdant rill, that flow'd
Between, in loveliness appear'd as much
Her former self surpassing, as on earth
All others she surpass'd. Remorseful goads
Shot sudden through me. Each thing else, the more
Its love had late beguil'd me, now the more
Was loathsome. On my heart so keenly smote
The bitter consciousness, that on the ground
O'erpower'd I fell : and what my state was then,
She knows who was the cause. When now my strength
Flow'd back, returning outward from the heart,
The lady, whom alone I first had seen,
I found above me. " Loose me not," she cried :
" Loose not thy hold ;" and lo ! had dragg'd me high
As to my neck into the stream, while she,
Still as she drew me after, swept along,
Swift as a shuttle, bounding o'er the wave.
The blessed shore approaching, then was heard
So sweetly, " Tu asperges me " that I
May not remember, much less tell the sound.
The beauteous dame, her arms expanding, clasped
My temples, and immerg'd me, where 'twas fit
The wave should drench me ; and, thence raising up,
Within the fourfold dance of lovely nymphs
Presented me so lav'd, and with their arm
They each did cover me. " Here are we nymphs,
And in the heav'n are stars. Or ever earth
Was visited of Beatrice, we
Appointed for her handmaids, tended on her.
We to her eyes will lead thee ; but the light
Of gladness that is in them, well to scan,

Those yonder three, of deeper ken than ours,
 Thy sight shall quicken." Thus began their song ;
 And then they led me to the Gryphon's breast,
 While, turn'd toward us, Beatrice stood.
 " Spare not thy vision. We have stationed thee
 Before the emeralds, whence love erewhile
 Hath drawn his weapons on thee." As they spake,
 A thousand fervent wishes riveted
 Mine eyes upon her beaming eyes, that stood
 Still fix'd toward the Gryphon motionless.
 As the sun strikes a mirror, even thus
 Within those orbs the twifold being shone,
 For ever varying, in one figure now
 Reflected, now in other. Reader ! muse
 How wond'rous in my sight it seem'd to mark
 A thing, albeit steadfast in itself,
 Yet in its imag'd semblance mutable.
 Full of amaze, and joyous, while my soul
 Fed on the viand, whereof still desire
 Grows with satiety, the other three
 With gesture, that declar'd a loftier line,
 Advanc'd : to their own carol on they came
 Dancing in festive ring angelical.
 " Turn, Beatrice ! " was their song : " O turn
 Thy saintly sight on this thy faithful one,
 Who to behold thee many a wearisome pace
 Hath measur'd. Gracious at our pray'r vouchsafe
 Unveil to him thy cheeks : that he may mark
 Thy second beauty, now conceal'd." O splendour !
 O sacred light eternal ! who is he
 So pale with musing in Pierian shades,
 Or with that fount so lavishly imbued,
 Whose spirit should not fail him in th' essay
 To represent thee such as thou didst seem,
 When under cope of the still chiming heaven
 Thou gav'st to open air thy charms reveal'd ?

Mine eyes with such an eager coveting,
Were bent to rid them of their ten years' thirst,
No other sense was waking : and e'en they
Were fenc'd on either side from heed of aught ;
So tangled in its custom'd toils that smile
Of saintly brightness drew me to itself,
When forcibly toward the left my sight
The sacred virgins turn'd ; for from their lips
I heard the warning sounds : " Too fix'd a gaze ! "

2

BEATRICE IN THE EMPYREAN

Paradiso, xxxi. 52-93

So rov'd my ken, and in its general form
All Paradise surveyed : when round I turn'd
With purpose of my lady to inquire
Once more of things that held my thought suspense,
But answer found from other than I ween'd ;
For, Beatrice, when I thought to see,
I saw instead a senior at my side,
Rob'd, as the rest, in glory. Joy benign
Glow'd in his eye, and o'er his cheek diffus'd,
With gestures such as spake a father's love.
And, " Whither is she vanish'd ? " straight I ask'd.
" By Beatrice summon'd," he replied,
" I come to aid thy wish. Looking aloft
To the third circle from the highest, there
Behold her on the throne, wherein her merit
Hath plac'd her." Answering not, mine eyes I rais'd,
And saw her, where aloof she sat, her brow
A wreath reflecting of eternal beams.
Not from the centre of the sea so far
Unto the region of the highest thunder,

As was my ken from hers ; and yet the form
Came through that medium down, unmix'd and pure.
"O Lady ! thou in whom my hopes have rest !
Who, for my safety, hast not scorn'd, in hell
To leave the traces of thy footsteps mark'd !
For all mine eyes have seen, I, to thy power
And goodness, virtue owe and grace. Of slave
Thou hast to freedom brought me ; and no means,
For my deliverance apt, has left untried.
Thy liberal bounty still toward me keep,
That, when my spirit, which thou madest whole,
Is loosen'd from this body, it may find
Favour with thee." So I my suit preferr'd :
And she, so distant as appear'd, look'd down,
And smil'd ; then tow'rds th' eternal fountain turn'd.

APPENDIX IV

SPECIMENS FROM THE ENGLISH VERSIONS OF THE *Vita Nuova*

LYELL (1835)

So noble and so modest doth appear
My lady when she any one salutes,
That every tongue becomes in trembling mute,
And none dare raise the eyes to look on her.
Robed in humility she hears her praise,
And passes on with calm benignity ;
Appearing not a thing on earth, but come
From heaven, to show mankind a miracle.
So pleasing is the sight of her, that he
Who gazes feels a sweetness reach the heart
That must be proved or cannot be conceived.
And from her countenance there seems to flow
A spirit full of mildness and of love,
Which says for ever to the soul, O sigh.

GARROW (1846)

I say then that she was of so noble a presence, so abounding in every charm, that those who looked upon her felt within them so chaste, so gentle a sense of pleasure, that they were incapable of describing it. Nor was there any one that had the opportunity of seeing her, who did not instantly feel compelled to sigh. These and other extraordinary effects

were produced by her, actually and miraculously ; wherefore reflecting on all this, and desiring to resume my former style of writing in her praise, I purposed saying some words whereby I might be able to make known her excellent and admirable powers ; so that, not only those who had occasion actually to see her, but that others also might know as much of her as can be conveyed by words ; and I made the following sonnet :

My lady doth appear so fair and chaste,
When turning to salute the passers by,
That every tongue grows silent tremblingly,
And on her not an eye presumes to rest.
She passes on (hearing her praise expressed)
Benignly clothèd in her modesty,
And seems a thing just 'lighted from the sky
On earth, a miracle to manifest.
Her face so charmeth those it shines upon,
That, through the eyes, it sendeth back alway
Sweet thoughts, which none that hath not felt can tell,
And from her lips there seems to flow as well
A soft and loving spirit, which doth say
Unto the soul incessantly : " Sigh on ! "

MARTIN (1862)

I say, her demeanour was so full of grace and dignity and every charm, that, looking upon her, men felt within them an emotion of inexpressible sweetness and elevation ; nor was it possible for anyone to look upon her, but straightway a sigh arose from his breast. These and even more marvellous effects were wrought by her in a manner at once most strange and admirable ; much meditating whereon, and wishing to resume my verses in her praise, I determined to express in words something of her wondrous and excelling influence, in order that not only those who had beheld her in the flesh, but others, might know what of her fair perfection

might be conveyed in words. Thereupon I composed this sonnet :

So kind, so full of gentle courtesy,
My lady's feeling is, that every tongue
To silence thrills, and eyes, that on her hung
With mute observance, dare no more to see.
Onwards she moves, clothed with humility,
Hearing, with look benign, her praises rung ;
A being, seeming sent from heaven among
Mankind, to show what heavenly wonders be.
Within her looks such stores of pleasure lie,
That through the gazer's eye creeps to his heart
A sweetness must be tasted to be known ;
And from his lips, with love in every tone,
A spirit soft and gentle seems to part,
Which to her soul keeps saying, " Sigh ! oh sigh ! "

NORTON (1867)

I say that she showed herself so gentle and so full of pleasantness, that those who looked on her comprehended in themselves a pure and sweet delight, such as they could not after tell in words ; nor was there any who might look upon her but that at first he needs must sigh. These and more admirable things proceeded from her admirably and with power. Wherefore I, thinking upon this, desiring to resume the style of her praise, resolved to say words in which I would set forth her admirable and excellent influences, to the end that not only those who might actually behold her, but also others, should know of her whatever words could tell. Then I devised this sonnet :

So gentle and so modest doth appear
My lady when she giveth her salute,
That every tongue becometh, trembling, mute ;
Nor do the eyes to look upon her dare.

Although she hears her praises, she doth go
Benignly vested with humility ;
And like a thing come down, she seems to be,
From heaven to earth, a miracle to show.
So pleaseth she whoever cometh nigh,
She gives the heart a sweetness through the eyes,
Which none can understand who doth not prove.
And from her countenance there seems to move
A spirit sweet and in Love's very guise,
Who to the soul, in going, sayeth : Sigh !

PLUMPTRE (1887)

So gentle and so fair she seems to be,
My lady, when she others doth salute,
That every tongue becomes, all trembling, mute,
And every eye is half afraid to see ;

She goes her way and hears men's praises free,
Clothed in a garb of kindness, meek and low,
And seems as if from heaven she came, to show
Upon the earth a wondrous mystery.

To one who looks on her she seems so kind,
That through the eyes a sweetness fills the heart,
Which only he can know who doth it try.

And through her face there breatheth from her mind
A spirit sweet and full of Love's true art,
Which to the soul saith, as it cometh, "Sigh."

BOSWORTH (1895)

She showed herself, I say, so gentle, and so full of all
pleasing qualities, that all who looked on her felt within

themselves a noble and sweet delight, such as they could not express ; and not one was there who could look upon her but he must needs sigh incontinent. Such and yet more marvellous things proceeded from her in wondrous and virtuous wise. So I, considering this, and fain to resume the theme of her praises, resolved to indite somewhat, wherein I might make her wondrous and excellent virtues known, to the end that not they alone who could see her with the eye of sense, but others too, might know such things concerning her as words have power to declare. Then I indited this sonnet :

So gentle and so noble seemeth my lady, when she greeteth any, that every tongue, faltering, becomes mute, and the eyes no longer dare to gaze. She goes on her way, feeling that she is lauded, clad in the kindly garb of humility : and she seemeth as though she were a creature come from heaven to earth, that she might reveal a miracle. She appears so pleasing to whoso regardeth her, that she sendeth to the heart a sweetness which none who proveth it not may know. And from out her lips there seemeth to move a spirit, sweet and full of love, which enters into the soul, and says, " Sigh ! "

DE MEY (1902)

I say, of a truth, she displayed such gentleness, and was so full of all that is lovely, those who beheld her were imbued with a soothing calm, past all words to describe ; nor was there anyone who looked on her, but forthwith he fell a-sighing. These, and even yet more marvellous acts, were wrought through her wondrous virtue. Whence I, eager to continue her praises, sought to find words to express her strange and beneficent influence ; that not only those who behold her, but others also might know of her, in so far as words have power to make it comprehensible. And then I made this sonnet :

So gentle and so modest in her ways
My Lady looks, whome'er she doth salute,
His tongue to silence stricken trembles mute,
He dares not e'en his eyelids lift to gaze.
She passes on, and hearing her own praise,
Clad in humility, pursues her route ;
So heavenly her mien, none would dispute,
That heav'n, on earth, a miracle displays.
More pleasing still to those who meet her eye,
Since through the eyes a sweetness she distils ;
None apprehends save he alone doth prove :
Between her lips a spirit seems to move,
Which in each heart a calm, pure love instils,
And to the soul comes softly whisp'ring: "Sigh ! "

RICCI (edited by, 1903)

I say that she showed herself to be so gentle and so full of every grace and beauty, that those who gazed upon her experienced in themselves such unutterable sweetness and joy that they could not express them in words ; nor was there any one who could gaze on her without sighing at her first glance. These and more wonderful things still proceeded from her in a marvellous and powerful way. And thus it came to pass that I, thinking upon this, and wishing to resume the theme of her praise, proposed to say words in which I should show forth her surpassing and excellent deeds ; so that not only those who could see her with the eye of sense, but others besides, might know concerning her that which words might convey. Thereupon I wrote this sonnet :

So gentle and so meek she doth appear
This lady mine, when men she doth salute,
That every tongue doth tremble and grows mute,
Their eyes to gaze upon her do not dare.

Onward she goes, and hears them sing her praise,
And yet she is with meekness clothed so,
She seems as come from Heaven to earth to show
Some wondrous miracle of Heaven's high grace.
To him who looks she's passing fair to view,
A sweetness from her eyes him pierces through;
Who feels it not, knows not the reason why.
It seems that in her features there doth move
A spirit sweet and running o'er with love,
That to the soul is ever saying: Sigh.

OKEY (1906)

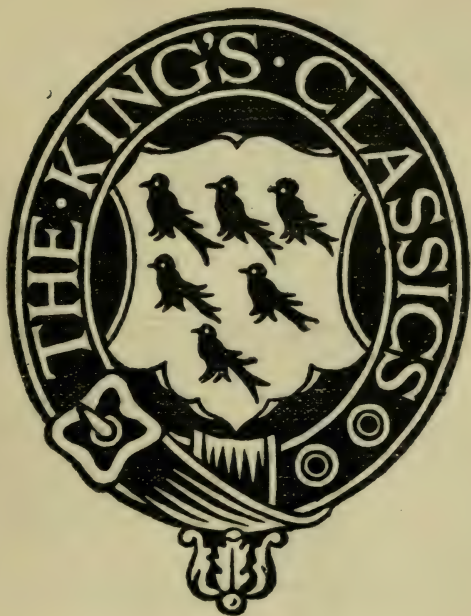
I say that she showed herself so gentle and so filled with all winsomeness, that they who gazed upon her, felt within them a pleasant and modest sweetness, such that none could tell it again, nor was any who could look upon her without being first constrained to sigh. These and more wondrous things proceeded from her by her power. Wherefore, pondering on this, and desiring to resume the manner of her praise, I purposed to say words in which I should make some of her wondrous and excellent effects understood, in order that not only those who could behold her with their bodily senses but that others should know of her as much as words can convey to understanding. Then I composed this sonnet:

So gentle and so modest my lady seems when she saluteth others, that every tongue grows tremblingly dumb, and eyes dare not to look on her. She goeth her way, hearing her praises, benignly clothed in humility, and seemeth to be a thing come from heaven to earth, to show forth a miracle. Herself she sheweth so winsome to him who gazeth on her, that through his eyes she giveth a sweetness to his heart, such that he who proveth it not, cannot understand it. And it seemeth that from her countenance a spirit moveth, gentle and filled with love, that goeth saying to the soul: sigh!

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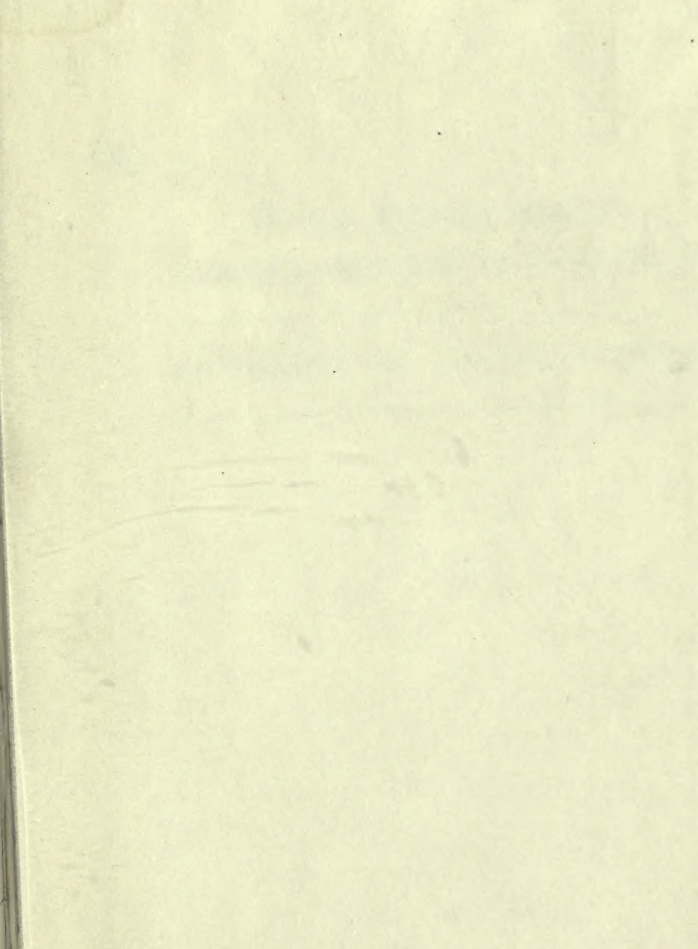
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